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1532

Albert Anderson Base
from
Grandma



"You never suspicioned I was so rich; did you, Master Archie!"—PAGE 104.


THE
MAGNET
STORIES



LYNDE PALMER

TROY, N.Y.

MOORE & NIMS



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P R E F A C E.

It is a law of nature, that for all healthy physical development, there must be the blessed influence of LIGHT. If plants are to bear fair blossoms and fruit, they must lie in the embrace of the sun. Shut them off from this, — persistently overshadow them in any way, — and blight, deformity, worthlessness must follow.

It is a spiritual law, that all healthy souls must be matured by heaven-light; and if anything throws this into eclipse, — if the shadow of any great sin is allowed to intervene, — the soul becomes feeble and stumbling; confused and bewildered, it wanders farther and farther from the Light, till, at last, it comes upon the verge of the “outer darkness.”

Among the most dangerous, and powerful, and ancient of soul-shadows, is Anger, — the second Shadow that fell between man and Heaven. How strong it is, how rapidly it

grows, what unceasing watchfulness and energy are required to escape from its tyranny, — this volume has feebly endeavored to portray. Perhaps there are but few of the youthful readers of these pages, who have keenly felt the power of this particular enemy. We will hope it. But there are many other Shadows, great and small; none can entirely escape. May the perusal of this simple story help some dwindling soul — wondering at its own feebleness — to search out *its* Shadow, be it never so cunning and stealthy; may it drag it to the Light, nor ever rest satisfied while there is one dark corner where it might hide itself. This may be a life-long struggle, but, at last, the morning will surely break, and the Shadows all flee away; and the happy soul, spotless and shining, shall come to that promised, shadowless city, where there can be no more stumbling, for the undimmed “glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.		Page
THE OWNER OF THE SHADOW . . .		11
CHAPTER II.		
THE SHADOW'S NAME . . .		34
CHAPTER III.		
HOP O' MY THUMB . . .		43
CHAPTER IV.		
ADELINE . . .		57
CHAPTER V.		
THE SHADOW ASLEEP . . .		73
CHAPTER VI.		
THE SHADOW AWAKE . . .		84
CHAPTER VII.		
UNDER FOOT . . .		111

CHAPTER VIII.

UNDER FOOT, CONTINUED	127
-------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX.

STRATEGY	150
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER X.

CREEPING UP	172
-----------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI.

BREAST-HIGH	187
-----------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

EQUAL	211
-----------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

STUMBLING	228
---------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SHADOW IS MASTER	247
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

CAPTIVITY, CAPTIVE	278
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

HEAVEN-LIGHT	299
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

EARTH-LIGHT	324
-----------------------	-----

THE MAGNET STORIES.

BY LYNDE PALMER.

I. DRIFTING AND STEERING.

II. ONE DAY'S WEAVING.

III. ARCHIE'S SHADOW.

IV. JOHN-JACK.

ARCHIE'S SHADOW.

CHAPTER I.

THE OWNER OF THE SHADOW.

BETTINE, Bettine," cried a clear, ringing voice, in the direction of the south fence.

Bettine lifted her flushed face, put back the damp rings of hair, and peered through the lilac bushes, past the white lilies nodding in the noonday heat, — the happy lilies that toiled not, neither did they spin, — and smiled as she caught a glimpse of the well-known sailor hat, and blue ribbon. In a minute, with a little sigh, she had turned back, and again taken up the work that had fallen in her lap.

"Bettine, Bettine," again cried the persistent voice. "I am coming over the fence. If the mountain wont come to Mahomet, why, Mahomet must go to the mountain."

“Do go, Tiny,” cried Bob, uneasily, looking up from the old chair he was mending. “He’ll be here in a minute, and then he’ll scold to find you sewing so hard. And I’m sure I don’t want you to work any more than *he* does ; but then how would you ever get a new bonnet for next Sunday? O, dear ! I wonder if that old law-suit will ever come to an end ! No, there is no use thinking of that. Ah, don’t you wish I could jump ahead five years, and be big enough to take care of you and grandfather — ”

Bob suddenly paused at finding he was only haranguing the lilac bush ; for Bettine had already passed the white peonies and the lilies, and had met Archie at the foot of the little tumble-down arbor.

“What is the matter with your ears to-day?” he cried. “I believe you have put cotton in them. I wanted to tell you such a grand plan we have been getting up. We all think of going up the river this afternoon, — say about five o’clock, when it is cooler, — taking our tea on one of the islands, in a gypsy sort of a way, and coming home by moonlight ! What do you say? Would you and Bob go?”

“Would we?” cried Bettine, clasping her hands, ecstatically. “O, a thousand times yes, — or —” her face suddenly fell.

“Or one times *no*, which more than balances the thousand? You weren’t going to say that, Bettine!” pleaded Archie.

“She will go, of course, wont she?” cried another voice; and just above the brown palings, appeared a handsome, curled head. “Or must I come and urge her myself?”

“Of course,” said Archie, quickly, answering the first question, while a slight shade of annoyance crossed his face.

The head mounted higher, showing itself in company with a carefully brushed coat, and the neatest of linen, while the handsome, shapely feet, changing sides of the fence, were encased in the most perfectly fitting boots. Not that in the one point of neatness he could claim any superiority over Archie, — who, with the true instincts of a gentleman, was most scrupulously careful in this respect, — but every garment, being fashioned in the latest style, gave him an air of great elegance in the eyes of poor Bettine, who now involuntarily sat down on the

little rustic seat, and confided the shoe with a patch, to the friendly protection of the pretty pink skirt.

“Yes, you really must go,” said Philip, speaking in a deliberate way he had. “The arrangements are perfect, and the supper will be something to be remembered. I shall see to all that myself, and there will be nothing wanting you may be sure.”

“Of course, there wont,” cried Bettine, warmly, watching his slender hands playing with his watch chain.

Archie bit his lips. “No, there wont be anything wanting, for *I* shall see to it. It was my idea from the first, and of course I take the responsibility.”

“Now why do you trouble yourself, my dear boy!” said Philip, lowering his voice, though Bettine heard every word. “There are a great many luxuries and delicacies of the season, which are expensive, and yet it would be nice to have them. Now if *you* should furnish them, you would probably have to deny yourself something which you actually need, while I should not feel it at all.”

“How very generous!” thought Bettine, but the unaccountable Archie flushed violently.

“And how do you happen to be so well informed upon what I am able to afford?” he cried, with no attempt at an undertone.

“Some other time,” said Philip, pointing with a courteous bow, to their companion.

“No, speak out,” cried Archie. “I have no secrets from Bettine.”

“Well, — if you insist upon it, — my common sense tells me that if papa Falconer came so near failing last week, that he had to call a meeting of his creditors, it isn’t likely he has a great deal of ready money to put in his son Archie’s pockets.”

“Failing! Creditors!” repeated Bettine, in blank astonishment. She had always considered Archie’s father such an inexhaustible mine of wealth.

“No, he didn’t fail, Bettine,” said Archie, in a constrained voice. “He made some compromise with his creditors for the present, by which he could go on with the business. But if he lives, and *I* live, we shall yet pay off every dollar, and owe no man living a penny!”

“I am so glad,” cried Bettine, who had an indistinct remembrance of what misery the word “failure,” had meant in *her* family. “And everything is to go on just as usual?”

“Yes,” said Philip, quietly, “thanks to my mother, who has lent Mr. Falconer about half our property.”

The veins in Archie's forehead stood out like cords, and his hands clenched involuntarily, as he made a step forward.

“Now don't bring out the blow-pipe this warm day,” said Philip, smiling and laying his hand on Archie's shoulder. “Not the least occasion. I am sure I did not say that we were not all very glad that papa Falconer should have it. Indeed, Adeline and I are very happy at the thoughts of obliging you. Pray, control yourself,” he added in a lower tone. “You really frighten Bettine.”

It was all very right and reasonable, but Archie felt the hot blood mounting, mounting! How he wished for a moment, that he could see a lion coming, that he might dart upon it and tear it in pieces; he had so much superfluous strength, and yet it was not quite enough to

bear that gentle tap, tap upon his shoulder. The drops stood upon his face.

“There, that will do, Philip,” said he, shaking him off. “I think Rosette will appreciate that patting better than *I* do,—if your hand has the St. Vitus’ Dance, and can’t possibly stop.”

Philip elevated his eyebrows, and smiled with unruffled composure at Bettine, whose face was very red.

“We must be careful how we approach Archie,” said he. “He is like a cannon, always too heavily loaded, and whenever he goes off, you must look out; if he doesn’t burst, he will, at least, kick terribly.”

Archie, struggling hard with himself, tried to smile. “Very good; and what do you call yourself?”

Philip laughed. “Only a poor nobody, who doesn’t like to be kicked, and so sometimes tries to draw the charge to this great gun; but it’s dangerous business.”

“Draw the charge!” cried Bob Leighton, suddenly appearing on the scene. “Yes, I should think so! There’s nothing you like

better than to ram in a triple load, and then touch it off."

"O, hush, Bob!" cried Bettine, in some alarm. Bob had very strong prejudices, and having espoused Archie's cause, was apt to be very unjust and unmannerly to Philip.

"I don't care," cried Bob. "Archie will be a great man one of these days. I don't care how far ahead *some* people seem to be now, their eleven sheaves will all have to tumble down to his one, sometime. Will you take me to live with you, when you are a great man, Archie?"

"O, yes," laughed Archie. "You and little Thumb, and I will be very happy in a home all by ourselves. Only we might have some trouble about boiling our potatoes, and making our tea. What would you say to being house-keeper for us, Bettine?" he asked with a smile.

"And having two new calico dresses a year, and living on boiled cabbage, and hasty pudding?" interposed Philip, speaking a little quicker than usual.

"No, Bettine," cried Archie. "You shall have everything you want, a dress for every day

in the week, and a silk as blue as your eyes for Sundays."

"Liberal," whispered Philip, "when he hasn't enough of his own to buy you a blue *ribbon* yet."

Bettine looked full of sympathy at Archie.

"Yes," said Philip, following the direction of her eyes. "I am very sorry for him too. It is hard when a fellow thinks his way is all paid through life, to find he has got to 'work his passage' instead."

Archie looked towards them uneasily.

"He says you will have to work your passage through life," repeated mischievous Bob.

"And what if I will!" flamed Archie, again. "It brings out all there is in a fellow, to struggle so. And then one gets some grand views from the mast-head, that are not shared by the comfortable passengers in the cabin, Philip. I'll tell you what, Bettine," he turned to her impetuously, "I may not become very rich, but money isn't God's best gift. Money will almost always come by the sweat of the brow, you know, but *greatness* can only come by sweat of the *brain*; that is the hardest, — nobody knows

how hard till he has tried it ; but then, it brings its reward, — something more precious than money, — and that is what I mean to have.”

Archie's cheeks were flushed, his eyes grew a deeper blue ; a painter could not have wished for a more perfect embodiment of beautiful youth and enthusiasm. Bettine felt it, as she looked at him in half frightened admiration.

“ It is such a pity he is so impetuous,” whispered Philip. “ He will never be very great, his character is not well balanced.”

“ I have not quite made up my mind what I shall be,” pursued the unconscious Archie, “ but I was reading in a French book, the other day, about some man that I call very grand. Of course he had a fine mind, and was splendidly educated, and then, there wasn't any great thing he couldn't do just as easily as any little clerk could measure off a yard of calico. This book said — ‘ People came to him and ordered a railroad or a canal, just as they would order a shoemaker for a pair of shoes.’ Now think of it, Bettine, suppose I was living in a little cottage, but suppose some day, a party of great men, who lived in palaces, should

come to the door, and say, ‘ will you please tell Mr. Falconer that we would like an ocean telegraph, and would he be so kind as to say when it could be done?’ Wouldn’t you be proud, Bettine?”

Philip laughed. “ Or perhaps they would like a ladder for the man in the moon, who sprained his ankle the last time he came down too soon, to enquire the way to Norwich.”

“ Perhaps,” said Archie, joining in the general merriment, “ and I should certainly try to furnish it. I wont admit that anything is impossible. I mean to be a man in advance of the age.”

“ And so be perfectly wretched,” interposed Philip. “ I don’t know of anything worse than being different from other people, and always being uncomfortable and out of place. One might better be a duck born in the midst of the desert of Sahara!”

“ But the fame!” cried Archie, “ think of being known and honored, and making men’s hearts beat and thrill, when the very names of the comfortable people have been forgotten for generations.”

“ And precious little I should care for that, after I was dead and gone,” said Philip. “ At any rate, Bettine; I have a piece of advice for you. Keep clear of being ‘housekeeper,’ for any of these great men with full heads and empty pockets. I suppose Socrates is one of Archie’s models, but all the world knows now, what a life poor Xantippe led with him. Hardly a rag to wear or a mouthful to eat, — no wonder she was cross. If she had only married a rich man, the name Xantippe might have stood for saint, instead of vixen. I don’t suppose there was a woman in that age, who wasn’t happier than the wife of Socrates.”

Bettine looked bewildered. Archie was ruthlessly picking a rose in pieces.

“ Come Tiny,” said Bob, uneasily, feeling the force of Philip’s words, and fearing that his favorite was getting the worst of it. “ You must come in out of this blaze, — you will have a sun-stroke.”

“ Nonsense ! ” cried Philip ; “ the sun doesn’t hurt her, any more than it does the peaches against the south wall, — it only makes her grow prettier. I want to tell her

something about *my* housekeeping. I haven't any fancy for a cottage. I prefer a building of stone, something like our present one, only handsomer." He pointed to the soft gray turrets and gables visible here and there through the trees. "And then *my* housekeeper should never be confined to *one* silk dress, — her closet should be a perfect rainbow, with a different color for every day in the week, and velvet and satin for Sunday. She should never put her pretty fingers in a dish-pan. I should never have them used for anything but to string diamonds upon. Then, of course, she should have books and pictures, pretty curtains, and soft carpets; eh, Bettine? how would you like that? which would be best?"

Poor little Bettine who had never worn a silk dress except for the sixtieth part of a second, in a most tantalizing dream, — flushed to the tips of her pretty ears, at the mere possibility of such grandeur. She looked wistfully at Archie, who had turned his back. She had had quite enough of living in a cottage. Ah! such scrimping and contriving, — but that was a secret.

“ Bettine,” cried Bob, again, “ you look very warm ; do come in, and let me make you a glass of iced lemonade, while you read the magazine awhile.”

Honest Bettine stared. Iced lemonade ! why, they couldn't afford to take ice, and there hadn't been a lemon in the house for weeks. But suddenly, as she caught Bob's eye, and a regretful pantomimic short-hand, which she well understood, — she remembered the pile of shop-work, which she had promised to have done that very night ; and she must have been out there nearly an hour. Yes, the “ iced lemonade ” and the “ last magazine,” were only genteel figures of speech, — flowers of rhetoric, under which lay the thorns of needle, thimble, and scissors. She rose hastily, still remembering to keep the patched shoe in the rear.

“ Ah, I thought you would like the lemonade,” said Bob, linking her arm in his.

Bettine looked at him reproachfully ; but the absurd Bob, — very proud of his sister, — always insisted upon keeping up a fiction of gentility and easy circumstances before their neighbors.

“But you haven’t answered our questions, yet,” cried Archie. “How about the picnic, to begin with?”

Poor Bettine remembered, with a sinking heart, her promise that the work should be finished and carried home that very night. She could not break her word.

“I am afraid I cannot go” — she began regretfully —

“No,” cried the ever-ready Bob, fearful of what might come next; “we have an engagement for this evening, — a very important engagement of some days’ standing, and it will not do to break it.”

“Ah, I think I did hear that the mayor had invited a few friends to meet some distinguished visitors, this evening,” said Philip, smiling at his important manner.

“And you really cannot go,” said Archie, with great regret. “Well, I suppose there may be other days just as lovely, but I had quite set my heart upon to-night.”

“But how about the other question?” cried Philip. “Wasn’t my picture the pleasantest?”

As Bettine hesitated, half assenting, she had

a strange impression that a cloud had come over the sun. Something chilled her. Could it be only the dark shadow stealing over Archie's face?

"Bettine has chosen!" laughed Philip, triumphantly. "You and the log-house must look out for another housekeeper, with more elevated sentiments."

"I do not intend to live in a log-house," said Archie, with more emotion in his voice than the occasion seemed to warrant. "And I am sure I can be rich, too, if I please, — if everybody thinks that is the best thing."

"I am sure I hope you will," said Philip, "and I'm sure I should be most happy to give you a start, but I'm afraid our family hasn't anything more to lend, at present."

"How insulting!" cried Archie, with a quick, fierce gesture, which made Philip draw back, involuntarily.

Bettine ran up to him with a little frightened cry. "Don't be so angry, Archie. O, how white you are!" she cried, as pale and trembling, he leaned against the arbor. A violent headache, to which he was subject, had come

suddenly upon him, with sharp, quick shafts of pain ; he closed his eyes with a weary look.

“ We all like you so very much,” said Bettine, tremulously, “ and some time Bob and I will certainly come and get tea for you in your dear little cottage. I didn’t think at first, — I’m sure we should like it best.”

“ See how you have frightened the child,” said Philip ;” she will say anything you want her to, now. Is this one of your triumphs ? ”

Archie looked up humbly. Philip might say anything now. After every such outburst of anger, he was always overwhelmed with shame, and the strongest reproaches from others were taken patiently ; they were not so bitter as the contempt he was heaping on his own head.

“ I did not expect a simple expression of good-will to be taken in such a way,” continued Philip. “ I confess to being a bungler in the way of expressing myself ” —

“ A great bungler, when you please,” muttered Bob.

“ Pray say no more,” cried Archie, with a pained face. “ I most heartily beg your pardon. They keep Bengal tigers in iron

cages," said he, glancing remorsefully at Bettine's tearful eyes. "I'm sure I don't know what ought to be done with *me*. Try to forgive me, Bettine. Could you shake hands? Thank you;" and he vaulted hurriedly over the fence.

Philip more slowly followed his example, pausing a moment on the other side.

"Such a fearful temper!" said he, pityingly.

"But there are so many *good* things about him," — said Bettine, anxiously. "If you had only known him as many years as I have" —

"O, a great many excellent things!" assented Philip, promptly. "I hope you do not think me so ungenerous as not to admit that. It is probably only because the sun is so bright that we can so clearly see the spots."

Bettine sighed, as she turned away. She did not like to see any spots in Archie, and yet, how just and even-tempered Philip seemed by contrast. She wished Archie was willing to imitate him in some respects; but he seemed to have taken one of his strong prejudices against him. Such a pity! he certainly might consent

to learn a few things of him, without pride taking offence, for Philip was two whole years older.

“Ah, Bob, what are you doing?” she cried, coming suddenly upon that young gentleman, bending with flushed cheeks over her pile of work.

“Helping,” said Bob, demurely. “I thought you’d never get through. What do you think of that button-hole, now !”

“It looks just like a row of shark’s teeth,” said Bettine, frowning and laughing. “You might much better have gone to school. O, dear, only think, I might have made twelve button-holes in all this time, and that would have been six cents.”

“Never mind,” said Bob, catching up his books. “They say, fretting makes the poorest kind of dipper for taking up spilled milk. You’ll finish it yet, and we’ll go down to-night and buy the new bonnet and ribbon. And then you’ll trim it up, to-morrow, and give it such a jolly style. Adeline Fairchild will just go crazy, and think it was certainly done by Madame Lustre, herself.”

At the very thought of such a climax of triumph, Bob immediately stood upon his head, — a peculiar way he had of relieving himself, under pressure of strong emotion, — and disappeared from Bettine's view, heels in the air.

But poor Bettine looked lovingly at the sweet grass, and the pale, blue summer sky, and dreamed of the island and the river. It was very pleasant to have Bob so proud of her, but she wished he was not quite so ambitious. Now, there was the pretty blue mouslin, he had been so anxious she should have. She did not mean to say that she was not very glad that it was hanging in her little closet; and yet, what a price she had paid for it! four weeks of early summer days, thousands of wild-flowers, robins, butterflies, clouds and grass, — all lost out of Bettine's life; and in return, just those few yards of blue mouslin. Bettine felt keenly that she had made a very bad bargain, though it was no worse than most older people are doing every day of their lives. She almost wished for a moment, that people were all clothed like the birds; but then, suppose Adeline Fairchild had been a golden-breasted humming-bird, and

she, only a little brown thrush, — why, Bob would have picked his heart out if he could not have found some way to paint her feathers.

So she thought, and worked on till it drew toward evening; the air was full of damp, spicy odors, and the birds dashed across the sky with long, sweet bursts of song.

“I knew you would finish it,” said Bob, rattling away the tea-things. “Now we will go and buy the bonnet.”

“Yes, go,” said Grandfather Leighton, looking up from the coarse mat he was braiding, with the smile which always made his old face look young. “It is hard for such young robins to be kept in a cage so long. Are you going down by the river, dear?”

“No, Grandfather, shopping,” said Bettine, just a little sadly.

“Didn’t you see, last Sunday,” broke in Bob, “she was perfectly indecent and disgraceful” —

“One of the Leightons indecent and disgraceful!” exclaimed his grandfather, in pretended alarm.

“Only a Leighton bonnet,” smiled Bettine.

“ Ah, that makes it better. My little one must have some finery, is that it? Well, well, I suppose that is according to Nature. There must always be pretty pink blossoms before we can look for the sober, solid fruit. But don't think too much of the blossoms, it is the life underneath that is of the most consequence. Wouldn't it be sad, Bettine, to be only a flower, all one's life?”

“ What *do* you mean, Grandfather?” cried Bob.

“ I knew two girls once,” said the old man, “ or let us say two apple-blossoms; they were very lovely, — for a long time you could not tell which was the sweeter of the two. But by and by there came a great wind, — an evil wind is sure to blow some time or other, — and the pretty leaves, youth, beauty, and riches, we will call them, all fell away. And now you could see very plainly the difference in the two blossoms. One pined and shrivelled, and mourned over what it had lost, and finally, — dried and useless, — fell from the great tree of life, to be raked up with other stubble, and burned. The other gradually expanded into a beautiful golden

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fruit, far more precious, and lovelier than it had ever been before, and, at last, became so perfect that it was gathered by the Lord of the harvest, himself."

Bettine smiled; she always understood her grandfather. She would remember that life underneath. It was very pleasant to think that when youth and beauty dropped away, there might still be something left, beautiful enough for the gathering of those glorious hands.

"But it's time for the blossoms now, any way, Grandfather," cried impatient Bob. "Come, Bettine, come!"

"Yes, yes," sighed the fond old grandfather, "I wish I could give them all the sunshine they needed, and that they had nothing to do but dance in the wind. If that law-suit — but no, we mustn't think of that. If I get all I expect to for these mats, and don't have a poor turn before I can finish another lot" —

"O, hush, hush, grandfather!" cried Bob, hastily. "Here comes Archie Falconer!"

CHAPTER II.

THE SHADOW'S NAME.



ARCHIE sat with Grandfather Leighton in the cottage door, while the warm sunset faded into the serenest golden twilight. Looking to the left, he caught glimpses of the river flowing sweet and solemn between its green banks, like a happy, peaceful life. To the right, stretched the bit of dusty road, down which he had watched Bob and Bettine, to the angle where they had taken the street car to go down into the city. How the good little Bettine, mindful of the mute appeal in his pale face, had turned, the last thing, to wave her handkerchief and smile, in token that everything was forgotten.

But Archie himself could not forget; he had also an uneasy suspicion that Grandfather Leighton in some way, had witnessed the tornado of the morning, and he knew, too, that

he had a most excellent memory for such things. "I shall not hear anything pleasant to-night," he thought, fidgeting a little in the silence. But Grandfather Leighton's first words somewhat reassured him.

"Some time ago," said he, "I was reading a queer little story from the German. It was a child's story, but none the worse for that. It was one of those curious little conceits, which sometimes have such a deep meaning behind them. It was about a man who had a shadow, an ordinary shadow at first, like everybody's else, but he didn't teach it to know a shadow's place, which, of course, should be always *under foot*. Now this shadow had great curiosity and ambition. Sometimes, in the evening when the lamp was lighted, it would dart out of the window, steal across the street, pay visits, and stretch its neck into family circles, where its master never visited. Day by day it grew larger and more conceited and unruly; often it would go before its master when it should have followed after, and would make the way so dark that he was continually stumbling over some imaginary obstacle, till finally, it so interfered

with his happiness, that he became alarmed, and realized that it was high time to conquer it. But alas, he had waited too long ! The shadow had grown the largest and strongest, and the only result of the struggle was, that they changed places, the shadow became master, and the master even less than the shadow — the most abject slave, who never went anywhere, nor did anything, except as the shadow dictated."

Archie lifted his eyes, which at times could be so wonderfully sad.

"There was no moral," said Grandfather Leighton, answering the mute inquiry. "It might have been meant to illustrate ingratitude, I do not know. But it set me thinking, Archie, set me thinking. You see, I have an idea that *souls* have their shadows, as well as bodies,—why not? And these shadows are the ones that are apt to grow heavier as we grow older, that often fall between us and our friends, and chill them, and sometimes grow large enough and dark enough, to even blot out heaven ! and then life must end in the valley of shadows indeed, fearing great evil. We must be very careful

of these shadows, Archie, my boy, and keep them down, lest they grow to be our masters."

"Soul shadows," repeated Archie, thoughtfully, "I cannot exactly make out what they might be."

"Sins, great faults, don't you think so? Isn't it those that make most lives gloomy, shutting out the blessed light, so that we are so often groping, and cannot find the right path? And generally in each soul, there is one sin that overtops the rest, that is most determined to be master. Now Bob has a shadow, who rules him more strictly every day. He very seldom does anything unless the shadow approves, and many an innocent pleasure have I seen it fall across, and all the brightness has been gone in a minute. The name of Bob's shadow is Pride," said he, with a sad kind of a smile, "and it has grown very fast the last year. It has been feeding on very precious food, lately, I'm afraid, it takes a little slice of truth almost every day." But the old man's voice sank to a whisper, — even Archie must not know the faults of his pets.

"There are a great many terrible shadows,"

continued he, musingly. "There is Covetousness, one that grows fearfully fast. I have known so many souls shrink away, and die in the chill of it! Then there is Slander, a mean, creeping shadow, not content with killing its own soul, but blighting everything it touches."

"And Archie has a shadow," said the boy, lifting his frank face, determinedly.

"Yes," said Grandfather Leighton, smiling, "Archie certainly has a shadow."

"Do you think it is my *master*, sir?" said he, controlling his voice with an effort.

"Not quite, not quite," said the old man, taking Archie's hot hand; his heart yearned over the noble, impulsive, boy. "But he is strong, fearfully strong, there is no time to be lost. I thought he was hardly under your feet to-day, eh, Archie?"

So Grandfather Leighton *had* seen, after all.

"No, sir, he was not," said Archie, looking up in a minute, such deep regret written on every line of his expressive face, that the old man doubted whether it was best or necessary to pain him any farther. But he went on.

"The first time I ever saw the Shadow,

Archie, your own dear mother was alive. How she laughed when it first began to show itself, for it was a funny little Shadow in those days, almost harmless. All it did then, was to double up your fists in the absurdest way, make your eyes shine, and your baby cheeks grow the brightest red, so that you only looked handsomer than ever; and she would hold you up with such pride, and laugh till she cried. She never guessed, how should she? that the Shadow could ever become so ugly and so strong as he was to-day; she never dreamed that he would make a slave of her darling. If she had seen him, as I did, moving your arms for you, using your tongue, and at last even daring to come up and look out of your eyes! Ah, my dear boy, such a fearful, wicked look he had! I was frightened. I thought for a moment, that he had taken possession once for all, and that I should never see my Archie's bright, kind face any more, — only the Shadow, only the Shadow!"

There was a short, quick breath, in the twilight, almost like a half sob.

"But it shall *not* conquer me," cried Archie,

vehemently, "I know it is an ugly Shadow, I hate it! I will fight it day and night."

"Valiantly spoken," cried Grandfather Leighton. "There is time yet, but remember it is a struggle for life! You must be on guard every waking moment."

"But," said Archie, "am I never to resent any thing? Must Philip always be so patronizing? There, I suppose I oughtn't to say that, he is very kind and patient with me, — but I wish he wouldn't be," he burst out impetuously. "I wish he wouldn't make such a show of forbearance. Now I'm unjust again. I don't think I can make you understand me, but Grandfather Leighton, (Archie had always called him by that name,) wouldn't it be right to show a little proper spirit now and then, just show him that I expect to be treated a little differently from Rosette?"

"I am a great advocate of proper self-respect," said the old man. "I don't advise any one to be trampled upon; and yet, for a little while, while the Shadow is so powerful, I would be very careful to do nothing to gratify him, to rouse him, — he grows so strong by exercise."

They were very still for a few minutes. "Of course you know the *name* of your Shadow, Archie?" asked Grandfather Leighton, presently.

"O, yes," said he, looking up with his frank smile. "It is Quick-temper, Passion, Anger. It is a hydra-headed thing."

"I've been thinking," pursued the old man, smiling, "of something that is very fatal to shadows, and that is, plenty of *light*; it is their death-warrant. Now let me give you a candle, Archie, which will trouble yours a little. It was taken from a great light-house, and there are plenty more. 'Be not hasty in thy spirit, to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.' That is, Archie, it is not only wicked but a very great *weakness* to be angry, it is an infirmity that belongs principally to the lowest order of intellects. Now I know you are very ambitious, and eager for great deeds,—let me give you another candle. 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' Isn't that worthy of your ambition, Archie, *better* than the mighty? Won't you try to be

this grand conqueror, that is, with the Help without which we can do nothing?"

Archie lifted his eyes reverently to the sweet June heavens. "It doesn't need an answer," said he, in a low tone. Then more cheerily, "Thank you for the candles, Grandfather Leighton. I think the Shadow is shrinking already, he looks so small and contemptible."

"Don't trust him, Archie, he is a cunning Shadow. He is like the fairy tent, which upon necessity could be folded and carried upon the palm of the hand, *but* at a magic word, it could expand so as to shelter a whole army."

CHAPTER III.

HOP O' MY THUMB.



HE garden gate suddenly clicked in the latch.

“There come my chickens,” said Grandfather Leighton, “and I will leave you to livelier company. This evening air is not much of a friend to my old bones,” and rising, he went in the house.

“Did you see your friends, and have a pleasant time?” asked Archie, as Bob and Bettine came up, fresh and rosy from their walk.

“Very satisfactory, indeed!” cried Bob, hastily, while Bettine, growing very warm, sat down, and began to fan herself with her hat.

The moon was just rising.

“How mysterious and romantic it makes the old garden look!” ran on the unconscious Archie, much to Bob’s relief. “One might

almost expect to see fairies come dancing out of that dark little grotto, away to the left."

"And sure enough," cried Bettine, rising in some alarm, "what is that, Archie?" she pointed to a little white figure, fluttering noiselessly towards them.

"You needn't run, Bettine," said Bob, with cool superiority, — (of course it would have been folly to confess the slight flutter he had felt for a moment, in his own breast), — "it is flesh and blood, it is only Wilfred."

"Ah, to be sure, little Hop o' my Thumb," said Archie, tenderly, lifting the child to his knee. "And what is he doing here in his night-dress and bare feet?"

"You didn't kiss me good-night," sobbed the child, "and I waited and waited, but you didn't come; you forgot me, Archie, you don't love me any more;" the tones were full of heart-broken reproach.

"Bless the dear little heart!" cried Archie, drawing the reluctant, curly head to his breast, "How could I forget him? Love him? why, I love him to distraction. And so he has had to climb out of his little bed, and come all this

way over the damp grass to find Archie! O, bad little Thumb!"

Nevertheless there was a tear in his eye, and he held the little brother very tight, while the child, quickly consoled, nestled closer, with a smile of the fullest content, gently patting Archie's brown cheek with his hand. Bettine brought a shawl to wrap around him.

"Archie," said the happy little Thumb, presently, "did you see how queer the moon was a little while ago? I came to the window to look for you, Archie, and there it was, up a little way, and looked just like a little door, round at the top, Archie, a door that went into a beautiful, bright place. I thought maybe it was heaven, and our Father had opened it to let somebody in. But it kept coming up and coming up, and there it was only the moon!" the child gave a long sigh. "Archie, you don't believe the moon is a hole in the sky, and people can go through it into heaven?"

"O, dear, no!" said Archie.

"How do they get there then?" said little Thumb. "I wish you would tell me something about that place where Mamma went, — you said you would some time."

Archie blushed. "I don't know very much about it. Bettine could tell you more. There's a river there, they say."

"O, yes," said the child, "and trees and flowers. I can remember that."

"*Remember!*" exclaimed Bob. "O, what a jolly curious chap! Why, *you* never saw it, goosey."

"Didn't our Father make me?" cried the child, indignantly. "I saw it before He put me down here at all."

Bob began a chuckling disclaimer.

"Hush!" said Archie, "let him have the comfort of it. I wish heaven could seem so to *me*, — like a lovely place I had once seen, and to which I should be glad to go back. Besides," said he dreamily, "who shall say but he is half right? I was reading something so curious, the other day, a quotation from a wise old book, almost as old as the Bible. It said something like this, — that all souls that are ever to be sent to earth, have been created once for all, and hidden away from the first moment of creation; but at the hour of their birth in a human body, an angel touches the mouth of the

child, which causes it to forget all that it has seen."

"How very curious!" cried Bettine.

"Sometimes I half believe it," said imaginative Archie. "It seems as if the angel might have been careless now and then."

"There was no mistake about me," said Bob, ruefully, "I don't remember a thing outside of this world, that's certain."

"Did he touch mine, Archie?" said the child, looking at him with great, earnest eyes.

"Now who'd have supposed that owl could understand?" cried Bob.

"Just kissed it, I think, little one," said Archie, smoothing the child's hair, with a peculiar tenderness he always had for anything smaller and weaker than himself, and which seemed very beautiful and touching in such contrast to his quick, fiery nature.

"And then I didn't forget every thing, *did* I, Archie?" asked the child anxiously.

"No, indeed!" said Archie, emphatically.

And, for a moment, even Bob became a half convert, as they sat in the mystery of moonlight, when the two worlds seemed to touch, and everything grow possible.

“ I wish I could remember more,” pursued the child. “ Sometimes I think I can, and then it makes my head ache.”

“ And serves you right,” cried Bob, recovering himself. “ Come, let’s talk sense a little while, or some livelier nonsense. I’ll tell you a story. Did you ever hear the true history of the great hero, after whom Archie named you?”

“ A thousand and one times,” laughingly responded Archie.

“ Then it must just begin to be an interesting story,” said Bob, coolly. “ Listen, Thumb. There was once a father and mother, who had a great family of children, and they thought it was best, as they were growing older, to lead them away into the great world, and leave them to take care of themselves. Now the youngest child — Hop o’ my Thumb, a mite of a fellow who could hardly be seen without a microscope — overheard this plan, as he lay in his little bed. So the next morning, he didn’t eat a morsel of breakfast, but saved his crust, so that when they started on their journey, he could drop a crumb every little way. By and by, as was agreed upon, you know, the father

and mother played a dodge upon the little innocents, and left 'em all alone. Then, of course, they all began to cry, except the brave little Hop o' my Thumb, who only said, — 'Follow me!' So the thirty-nine brothers and sisters, with seventy-eight rows of knuckles in their eyes, followed him, he followed the crumbs, and that very night he brought them all safely back to their father's house. There's an example for you, Thumb."

The child suddenly flung his arms around his brother's neck. Archie could feel the little heart beating fast.

"Ah, now I know what you mean, Archie," cried he, with a pleased little laugh, "I just thought. I know why you called me Hop o' my Thumb, I've found it out! You think I dropped crumbs when I came down! Did I, did I, Archie? and will I find the way back to our Father's?"

"My patience!" cried the astonished Bob. "He'll just set me crazy. I'll tell you what, Thumb, if you don't get over such queer thoughts, you'll have a head as big as a pumpkin, and a body the size of a radish."

They all laughed at the appalling picture.

"I never heard him talk so before," said Archie.

"Ah, I never found it out before!" said the child, triumphantly.

"And you haven't found out anything now," cried Bob. "That wasn't a true story, — it wasn't about heaven at all."

"You can't cheat me, Bobby Leighton," said Thumb, with the serenest composure, "I guess I know that we all came down from our Father's, and I know I must have dropped some crumbs. I b'lieve I remember it."

"O, my!" cried Bob. "Next thing he'll say he wants to die, and play on a harp, like those queer little boys in Sunday-School books."

"Not a bit of it," cried Archie, quickly. "He's an honest, rosy little Thumb, who loves tops and marbles, and doesn't want to die at all, *does* he?" — he pressed him tighter.

"O, no!" said Thumb, in some surprise, "I don't want to die. I tell our Father so every day. I don't like dying at all. I'm going to live a great while, and then, by-and-by, I'll find my way back by the crumbs."

Archie looked at Bettine, in despair.

"Would mamma come out a little way, when I got almost there, Archie?"

"He never saw her, did he?" whispered Bettine.

"She died the night he was born," said Archie, in a low tone.

"We just missed each other," added little Thumb, simply.

"Come now," said Archie, rising hastily, "we must go home; you ought to have been asleep two hours ago."

"Well, just tell me first, where to look for the crumbs, and then I'll go, Archie," said the child, coaxingly.

"My dear little Thumb," said Archie, firmly, feeling that he must put an end to it, "there *are* none. You never dropped any."

"Didn't I?" said the child, in a tone of great disappointment. "Who did, then? Of course *somebody* knows the way back to our Father's."

"Yes," hesitated Archie; "we will talk about it to-morrow."

"But just tell me who dropped 'em, Archie,

or I'll have to think about it all night," pleaded the child.

Thumb had a healthy little nature, but when thoroughly excited, he would lie awake for hours. Archie knew this, as he turned, in great perplexity, to Bettine.

"How shall we quiet him?" he whispered. "I wish I could let the poor little fellow believe it."

"If you wouldn't laugh," began Bettine, timidly.

"Oh, no!" cried Archie.

"Well, you are right, Willie," said she, aloud. "Some one did drop the crumbs, but not Hop o' my Thumb, — there was another brother, they called him the Elder Brother."

"Capital, Bettine!" cried Archie, in genuine admiration. "How much quicker girls are!"

"I knew there was some one," said Thumb, nodding his head, in deep satisfaction. "Now where did he drop them, Archie? did you ever find any?"

"What a terrible Thumb!" cried Archie, in comical despair. "This is too deep water for me. I am up to my ears."

“Let me see,” mused Bettine, “what *would* be a crumb? Anything that Jesus said to show us the way to heaven, wouldn’t it? Anything he wanted us to do. You see Willie, we first must be very good, and then we will find a crumb, not a real crumb of bread, but — but —”

“What a precious mix!” ejaculated Bob, who had betaken himself to his head a dozen times, in the last five minutes, in vain attempts to relieve the pressure on his mind.

Little Thumb looked troubled.

“Well, now,” said patient Bettine, “we will say that Hop o’ my Thumb wants to find his way to our Father’s house. Well, he knows our Father loves children who don’t say bad words, and have bad thoughts, so, if little Thumb keeps himself clean in that way, — he will come across a little crumb that says, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.’ And then he will know that is one of the kind of crumbs dropped by the Elder Brother, and he will know he is in the right path. And there is another beautiful little crumb for good children, — “Suffer little children —”

“O, yes,” interrupted Thumb eagerly, “I know that one; but where will I find them, Tiny?”

“You know you wont just pick them up in your fingers, Willie,” said the perplexed Bettine. “It is your *soul* that goes in this path up to heaven, and finds them,—don’t you know?”

“Of course!” cried little Thumb, “how could *I* go without my soul? Don’t you suppose I know it’s right in me somewhere?”

Bob gave a crow of delight.

“You’ve made it all clear to him now, Tiny. How well he understands it!”

“I *do* understand it,” cried Thumb, with great spirit, as with baby dignity he forebore to ask any more questions. Very confused and curious, however, were the ideas trying to shape themselves in the busy little brain. He meant to be on the lookout for this right path, and some day, his own stout little legs—with his new shoes on the end of them—should carry him a good piece therein. Then perhaps if his soul had been good and kind, he should find one of those queer crumbs, Bettine told about,

on a nice little roll of white paper. And, if he liked the path, he meant to come back every day, and walk a little farther, till at last he should really come to our Father's house.

In the midst of these musings Archie had carried him to the garden gate. Everything was so beautiful and pure in the solemn moonlight; earthly passions were all stilled, — the boy's heart was thrilled with better aspirations.

"I wish I could always feel as I do this minute, Bettine," he said, lingering. "There are a great many things in life that I am struggling after, but just now, nothing seems better than having a right to some of those crumbs — those promises to 'him that *overcometh*,' for instance," his voice showed his deep earnestness, "or that glorious one, — it would be too much to hope, Bettine, — that last crumb, at the very end of the journey — 'Well done good and faithful servant.'"

Archie started at a sudden rustling in the shrubbery.

"Is Saul also among the prophets?" said Philip Fairchild, with a little laugh, as he emerged from the lilac-bushes.

The Shadow trembled, quivered, prepared for a spring. Archie held him down firmly.

“ I don't wonder you are surprised,” said he, with a burning face, but a frank smile. “ It must seem very absurd to you, — especially after to-day,” he turned away.

“ I hope I don't intrude,” said Philip, “ Bob told me you were here — ”

“ Not at all,” cried Archie, walking on rapidly with his light burden, “ I was just going.”

“ Temper again,” said Philip, to himself. “ He cannot hide it, do what he will.”

CHAPTER IV.

ADELINE.



RS. FALCONER had gone out to pay some visits, and her daughter, Miss Adeline Fairchild, after roaming discontentedly from one room to another, finally found her way to the library. Archie was there, as usual, with his hair all rumpled up, and his cheeks burning, and a half dozen heavy books around him. Philip, also, lay upon the lounge, with a headache, languidly playing, now and then, with his dog, Rosette. Little Thumb sat at Archie's feet putting some blocks together.

Adeline threw herself into an easy-chair, and contemplated the group.

Philip looked very gentlemanly and aristocratic, — the Fairchilds were all very distinguished in their appearance, — but as she turned to Archie, she could not help acknowledging

that, in spite of irregular features, there was something singularly attractive in his face. The charm might lie in his eyes, which were blue, with the unusual accompaniment of long, black eyelashes, — they were certainly very rare, and capable of a wonderful amount of expression. But there, a critic would declare the search for beauty ended, the rest of the face was almost plain, except, indeed, when he smiled — *that* seemed a revelation. The lighting of a candle in a dull, opaque vase, which suddenly becomes transfigured with the most exquisite and beautiful tracery, might give some idea of the change. Very few could resist the charm of Archie's smile.

“ One cannot help liking him, in spite of his great faults,” mused Adeline. “ I wonder why it is? Bettine says, she has heard of people who have a kind of magnetism about them, that attracts other people, whether they will or no, and we think Archie must have it, — we can't explain it any other way, — he certainly is not handsome. But I always have liked him, ever since mother married, and we came here to live, almost five years ago. I wish we were not

always having such misunderstandings. It is strange when we have so many points in common. He is ambitious, generous, and full of noble impulses, and so am I. But then he has the quickest, most fiery temper in the world, and there we differ," thought Miss Adeline, complacently. "And then he is very hard to please. I am sure I never parade my superiority in this or any other respect, but always show the greatest patience and pity for him, but, — it is astonishing, — the greater consideration one shows for him, the more furious he will become, as a general thing."

Adeline sighed, and fanned herself, but she was fast getting tired of soliloquy.

"Archie," she broke out, at last. "Can't you put by those books a few minutes? You are always so eager over something."

"Haven't I told you why I am 'eager' over this?" said Archie, pushing back his damp hair. "Dr. Bunscombe thinks if I keep up my readings through vacation, this summer, I can enter college in the fall, without a doubt. I am so anxious to go! I believe I dream of it day and night."

“ I hope you wont be disappointed,” said Philip, from the sofa.

“ Archie can do anything he wants to,” cried little Thumb, with a dim perception of the implied doubt.

“ Not quite,” laughed Archie, “ but it will not do any harm to *aim* high, — if I miss the stars I may at least hit the clouds.”

“ Thunder clouds?” asked Philip, significantly.

Archie was out of patience with himself to find his color rising. It was so absurd that he could not take a joke. Besides, if it were not meant for pleasantry, had not Philip a bad headache?

He turned, and looked out of the window, but Philip saw his frown faithfully reflected in that perfect little hand-glass, — Hop o’ my Thumb.

“ Archie,” began Adeline, upon another tack,” do you think the Leightons have anything?”

“ A great many things, I should think,” said he, absently.

“ Pshaw ! you know very well what I mean.

Have they really any property, as they try to make us believe, or are they actually as poor as church-mice?"

"I am sure I don't know," said Archie, turning back to his books.

"But did you see last Sunday, what a very handsome bonnet Bettine wore? Madame Luster's very latest style, and she must have paid enormously for it! Her sacque was very pretty too, though, when the wind blew it up, I am pretty sure I saw the marks of the iron on the wrong side, — the silk was probably dressed over. But she really did look very nice, so that Mrs. Livingston actually asked mother who that pretty, stylish-looking girl was!"

"A very natural question, I should think," said Archie, quietly.

Adeline colored. "But the question is, is it right for a girl, in her position, to be so extravagant, and make herself so conspicuous?"

"What position?" cried Archie, fairly shutting his books, and turning around to face his questioner.

"You are not so stupid as you try to appear," said Adeline, coloring still more, "but I am

not afraid to speak. *My* opinion is, that the Leightons are in grinding poverty, in spite of their grand, reserved ways. And as for that lawsuit, which is going to make them so rich, that is a myth!"

"There you are very much mistaken," said Archie, warmly. "The Leightons used to be a very wealthy family. I can remember when they lived in that handsome house below us. But when Bettine's father died, his affairs were found to be in great confusion, — his partner was an unprincipled scamp, who had managed to get everything into his own hands, — and Grandfather Leighton was advised to begin a lawsuit, which I am afraid has cramped him very much all these years, and will only end disastrously at last."

Adeline nodded her head, and, bending forward, said in a low tone, —

"Do you know I think Bettine does shop-work! What do you think of that?"

"Very much to her credit," cried Archie, "only I'm sorry for the necessity."

"But *she* doesn't think so," cried Adeline. "Perhaps she is afraid the Fairchilds and Fal-

coners would not like to associate with a sewing girl, though I am sure I shall always treat her most kindly, and be very sorry for her. But if you only knew what pains she and Bob take to conceal it! I think I can give you proofs though, before long, that I am right."

"Proofs!" cried Archie, bringing his hand down on the desk, with a report like a pistol, "I hope you wouldn't be so ill-bred, and prying and meddlesome —"

Adeline burst into tears.

"What is the matter now?" cried Philip, rousing from his light sleep. "Couldn't you have any compassion on my headache? Adeline crying too!" said he, raising himself, curiously.

"I have been very unmannerly and violent," confessed Archie, much distressed. "I hope Adeline will try to forgive me."

"I hope I am too much of a Christian to lay it up against you, Archie," said Adeline, deeply injured, "but I cannot help feeling it. I am sure mother has told you how sensitive I have always been ever since I was a baby, — the least word of blame utterly unnerves me. It

may be a fault, but it is something I share with the most delicate and high-toned natures. It killed poor Keats."

Archie again looked out of the window, his face very red, as he murmured some unintelligible words. He then gathered one or two books, and went hastily out of the door. In a moment he was back again.

"Adeline," said he, gravely, "I don't think I shall ever again forget your misfortune."

"Misfortune!" cried Adeline. It was such a disagreeable way to put it.

"Yes, misfortune," repeated Archie. " 'When the pitcher falls upon the stone, woe unto the pitcher; when the stone falls upon the pitcher, woe unto the pitcher; whatever befalls, *woe* unto the *pitcher*!' You may be very superior, Adeline, but there are so many more stones in the world, than pitchers, — it is certainly a great misfortune to be a pitcher."

And away he went; little Thumb clattering after him.

Adeline remained in some perplexity. It was hard to decide whether Archie meant to be complimentary or not. She finally concluded

in the affirmative. Pitchers were more valuable than stones. Perhaps Archie had really begun to see her superiority. *She* was a delicate china pitcher, and Bettine, a common boulder. It was a pleasant thought.

“If Archie could only have waited a moment,” she continued aloud, “I think I could have satisfied him that my motives were not those of prying curiosity, but only the friendliest interest. If Bettine’s secret were once fairly out, I am sure she would only feel relieved, especially when she found that we treated her just as kindly as ever. And then, you know, I could offer her plenty of work from the house. Wouldn’t you go over now?”

But Adeline’s only reply was the lazy droning of the flies. Philip and Rosette were again both fast asleep.

She sighed over their stupidity, took up her garden-hat, and went out of the back-door.

“There is a board off the fence, I remember,” she said, “and if I can crawl through, I will steal up the back way, for once, and give Bettine a pleasant surprise.”

These kind thoughts were put in successful

execution. Softly came Adeline through the garden, in her light slippers, rounding the lilac-bushes as innocently as the noon zephyr. She smiled as she caught sight of Bettine, at the little window, with her head bent low over something very engrossing.

“I shall talk to her faithfully and kindly upon the folly and danger of deceit,” murmured Adeline. But just as she had nearly reached the window, with her hand out-stretched to touch Bettine’s shoulder, — she stepped upon a dry twig, which snapped with a startling report, and making a misstep, she stumbled and fell directly in a sweetbrier bush, scratching her face and hands cruelly.

“And what on earth are you doing there, Miss Adeline?” cried Bob, coming in at the gate, swinging his books, at this most inopportune moment.

“I just ran over to be a little friendly and neighborly,” began Miss Adeline, in some embarrassment. “But what a senseless place to have a rose-bush!” she cried, thinking it wiser to take the aggressive.

“I suppose it is,” said Bob, demurely;

“ though none of our family ever cared to get in the house by the window. You are so original, Miss Adeline.”

“ For shame, Bob !” cried Bettine ; who, assisting Adeline to rise, was conducting her to the parlor, where she made her lie down, while she brought some soothing lotion to bathe her face.

“ This is the way one generally gets rewarded for a kind action,” murmured Adeline. “ I was just intending to give you a pleasant surprise.”

Bob rolled his eyes frightfully.

“ Why didn’t you take me right in the room where you were sitting ?” she continued ; beginning to recover herself, and turning over the books on the table.

“ It is warmer there, and the flies are so troublesome,” said Bettine, quietly.

“ And what is this handsome book ?” said Adeline, going to a stand in the corner. “ O, the Bible. I hope you don’t keep it merely for ornament, — it looks as if it were never touched.”

“ Yes, we do,” said Bob, gravely.

“That is shameful,” said Adeline, reprove-
ingly. “Now, Bob, wont you, just to oblige
me, promise to read a chapter in it every
day?”

“No,” said Bob, very bluntly.

“I am not angry with you, Bob,” said Ade-
line, with a smile meant to be very sweet and
patient. “Perhaps you are like my cousin
Albert; he says he can’t possibly take any
interest in the Bible, because it is so *common*;
it is in the hands of the very lowest people. If
it were something very rare, now, he might see
that it was of some importance.”

“No,” laughed Bettine; “I don’t believe
that is Bob’s reason. I’m sure he never thought
the Bible too *common* to read.”

“If he did,” said Adeline, “I should answer
him as I did my cousin. In the first place,
you must know that Albert thinks a great deal
of *family*, — as perhaps he has some reason to,”
she added, with reluctant modesty. “So I
said to him, one day — ‘Albert, you are mis-
taken about the Bible being common; it is, on
the contrary, exceedingly aristocratic. No other
book can trace its origin back so far; it belongs

to the very oldest families among books !' You don't know what an impression it made upon him. The idea had never occurred to him before ; had it to you ? ”

Bob had immediately betaken himself to his head.

“ No,” said Bettine ; her face red with the struggle for gravity. “ It is certainly very original.”

Adeline waited very complacently till Bob was again right side up.

“ Why won't you promise me, then,” she asked, “ to read in this a little every day ? ”

“ Because,” twinkled Bob, “ I've a little red Bible, that I've used for years, and I like it better, — handier, you know.”

Adeline was exceedingly disconcerted at such a climax to her home-missionary labors. It was very impudent in Bob to lead her on in such a way ; but he managed to throw such an expression of utter guilelessness and innocence into his face, that she could not be quite sure whether he meant it or not. She wisely concluded to let it pass.

“ Where are you reading, now ? ” said she,

in a moment, with all her old patronage. "Perhaps I might explain something to you; we have such excellent "notes" at home."

Bob made her a bow of extravagant gratitude. "We are reading in course," said he; "it isn't very interesting just now. Or, yes, Bettine, that was rather curious, this morning, about the "holy perfume." "

"The holy perfume?" repeated Adeline. "I don't just recall it."

"Yes," said Bettine; "the priests made it to use in the old Jewish church."

"And what was there curious about it?"

"Why, it was so holy, the people were forbidden to smell of it; and if they did, they died!"

Adeline was thoroughly awake.

"Of course it didn't tell how it was made!"

"Yes," said Bob; "there was a like weight of frankincense and galbanum, and some other things" —

"Don't you wish," said Adeline, eagerly, "that somebody would dare to make it now, and smell of it!"

Bob gave a delighted chuckle. "I was tell-

ing Bettine, this morning, that if some people I knew, had lived in those days, and heard about that perfume, they wouldn't have lived any longer than it took them to get up to the temple ! ”

Adeline flushed violently. She understood very well who was meant by “ some people,” and that Bob probably had his own suspicions about the “ pleasant surprise ” she had given them, that morning. She arose to go, pausing, however, as she passed through the hall, at sight of a large pile of mats.

“ Your grandfather really braids mats very well,” said she. “ I hope they find a good market, — he is such a nice old gentleman. But he has a large stock on hand, hasn't he? I believe I will take one or two, just to encourage him.” She drew out her purse.

“ Encourage grandfather ! ” exclaimed Bob, with the air of a prince of royal blood, “ I don't understand you. Of course grandfather must amuse himself in some way, these long days, while his eyes are so poor ; but what difference do you suppose it can make to him whether he sells them or not. If you would like one or

two," he continued, persistently turning from Bettine's flushed face, "take your choice. We shall be most happy to give them to you."

Adeline turned away with a very uncomfortable feeling that she ought to make some one an apology. It had certainly been a most unsatisfactory morning, and it did not at all add to her peace of mind, as she went out the gate, to meet Archie Falconer just coming in.

"If he could only see those Leightons as I do, — but he is so hopelessly blind!" murmured clear-sighted Adeline.

CHAPTER V.

THE SHADOW ASLEEP.



THE summer passed like a dream to Archie. Some faint consciousness he had of blue, cloudless skies, of warm rains, flowers, birds, and sweet, spicy odors from the pine forests, which here, in the suburbs, crept down almost to the town. But his real life was in his books. He had a great ambition, and he almost grudged any minute that was not given to the attainment of this end.

“Why *do* you study so?” asked Bettine one day, when, suffering from one of his headaches, he was forced to be idle.

“Study so!” cried Archie, “I don’t do half enough. The great German scholar, Heyne, only used to allow himself every other night to sleep! Think of that. I tried the same plan a little while ago, but it wouldn’t work. After the first week, I would fall asleep about one or

two o'clock, in my chair." And Archie sighed over the healthy young nature that would not be abused.

"That was downright lazy and self-indulgent," laughed Bettine.

"It certainly was," assented Archie, earnestly. "My head will only bear just so much, and then it tries its very best to split. Sometimes I am afraid it isn't the right kind, after all."

"There is some mistake about it," said Philip, coming up. "Archie's skull wasn't made large enough, and as it isn't in the least accommodating, and his brain keeps on soaking learning as a sponge does water, one can naturally foretell that a *crack* will be the result. A great many think it is cracked now."

Bettine's merry face dimpled into a laugh.

Archie felt greatly annoyed; the laugh hurt him more than the words. Bettine used to believe in him so fully, — but ever since Philip came, it seemed as if there had been a gradual change. It was very hard to be made ridiculous in her eyes.

"But pshaw!" said Archie, out of patience

with himself, "I shall make myself more ridiculous yet, if I take offence at every trifle. Are there more 'pitchers' in the house than Adeline?"

Archie had been exercising great self-control since the talk with Grandfather Leighton, and had kept down the Shadow so well, that, at times, he almost believed he had conquered it. But it was only asleep, and, now and then, at these word encounters with Philip, it turned and muttered in its sleep. Still he kept it down.

"I am not at all disheartened," said he, in a minute, with his pleasant smile. "A big bell cracked may be heard farther than a tea-bell. You shall see if I don't make a noise in the world yet, when education gives me the right kind of a tongue."

"Isn't he conceited?" asked Philip, appealing to Bettine, and disappointed at surprising a look of admiration in her eyes.

"You are changing your mind, then, Bettine? You begin to think that a head full is better than a pocket full?"

"It seems grander, sometimes," hesitated Bettine.

“ Yes,” cried Archie, his eyes kindling, “ which would you rather leave behind you, when life is over, — a grand monument to show where you died? or, as Ruskin says, all manner of great and lofty deeds — ‘ monuments to show where you *lived* ? ’ ”

Bettine did not hesitate in her answer now.

“ Well, Bettine,” said Philip, quickly, “ if *you* think it is better to have a college education, I will have one too. And then I shall have everything,” he added, in a lower tone.

The summer passed, — the time drew near for the realization of Archie's hopes. His eyes shone brighter every day, his cheeks burned with excitement.

“ Father,” he would cry from time to time, “ are you making any arrangements? Have you written to President A, B, or C? ”

But Mr. Falconer was moody and irritable. “ All in good time, Archie,” he would say, shortly, “ all in good time. I will let you know when the arrangements are made.”

“ Bettine,” cried Archie, calling her to the fence, one evening in early September, “ the time has come at last! Father says he will see

me in the library to-morrow morning, and then I suppose everything will be settled." His eyes danced with happiness. "I shall probably go in a few days. I shall begin to be a man.

"I am so sorry for girls, sometimes," he added, ingenuously. "I don't see what they have to give them energy to live on. There are so few prizes for them in life, while there is everything for a boy. How different life must look to you and me, Bettine!"

"I suppose it does," said she, demurely, "but then I suppose I have something to be thankful for. I might be a goose, or a turkey being fatted for Thanksgiving, and that would be worse than being a girl, wouldn't it, Archie?"

"Perhaps," said Archie, whose thoughts were far away.

"Isn't it a queer thing, too," said Bettine, just a little piqued, "that when we are shut off from so much on earth, the prizes of heaven seem to be offered to women just as well as to men? Of course there must be some mistake about it."

"O, Bettine! Bettine!" cried Archie, blush-

ing, "what a lump of conceit you must think me! Girls are a great deal the best, and they are ever so much surer of getting that last and greatest prize, than we are. You see I hardly know what I'm saying to-day. Aren't you very glad I'm going? But you needn't tell me so till to-morrow." And away he dashed, in his excitement, — feeling that Bettine's sympathy and congratulation would be too much for his full cup.

The next morning dawned — a sweet, misty September day. The whole world was so beautiful to Archie, as he dressed near the open window!

"I shall miss some pleasant talks with Bettine," he said, "and my music," — he looked affectionately at a fine house-organ, which had once been his mother's, and which he had been allowed, at his eager request, to keep in his own room. "I have told you so many of my secrets, dear old friend," said he, running his hand over the keys, "and you were always full of sympathy," he involuntarily touched some minor chords, as his thoughts ran on. "And dear little Thumb will grieve for me terribly,

but I shall be back now and then, and there will be long vacations. Besides some things will be so much pleasanter. Adeline's goodness and forbearance are getting so oppressive, and Philip's jokes, — I shall breathe freer when I am out of their reach. It will be easier to be patient among strangers, who don't know where to touch the sore spots, or, what is worse, make such a show of avoiding them."

He arose, and went down the stairs, whistling merrily. The library door was ajar, — his father was already there. "So much the better," thought Archie, who had feared his happiness was to be postponed till after breakfast. He was in exuberant spirits, and stumbling upon Mrs. Moppet, — the good old housekeeper, who had been with them ever since he was a baby, — he flung his arms around her, and gave her a hearty kiss, leaving the good lady fairly blushing with confusion and surprise.

"Yes, father," cried Archie, joyfully obeying his summons. "Which college have you decided upon? And how soon shall I go? You shall be very proud of me, father!" There

was such a vibration of happiness in the tone of his voice.

Mr. Falconer raised his head; it was pale and troubled.

“Shall I go soon, sir?” repeated Archie, too much absorbed in himself to notice anything amiss. “If it is to-day, I can be ready, I can pack my trunk, myself. I will not make mother any trouble. I have kept half ready this long time, because I know you like promptness.”

“Wait a minute, Archie,” said his father, feeling that he must put an end to it. “You are not going to-day, nor to-morrow, nor, perhaps, — at all! At least, you must give up college, for the present, my boy.”

Give it up! Archie could not quite take in the meaning of the words.

“You are joking, father,” said he, with a smile of incredulity; but his voice trembled.

“It is no joke,” said Mr. Falconer, with an effort. “I should like to indulge you, — it is a great trial, but I cannot afford to send you, Archie.”

“Afford?” repeated Archie, looking around

the handsomely furnished room. He did not remember ever to have heard the word before.

His father understood the look. "I have been very unfortunate, lately, Archie. This house doesn't belong to me any longer, — I have signed it over to your stepmother, in pledge for some money she has let me have to save me from utter ruin."

"So Philip was right," thought Archie, with a tight feeling at his heart.

"And are we then dependent upon Philip's mother?" asked he, with a deep flush.

"No, Archie. I can yet support my family, but I must live very closely for a year or two. I confidently expect to retrieve all, but, at present, I must guard against every expense."

"But father," cried Archie, again, — he could not bear to give up this long-cherished hope, "there is the money left me by my own dear mamma, — it would carry me through a year, at least, and I am sure she would rather I spent it that way than any other. Do, father, say I may take it!"

Mr. Falconer turned from Archie's eager

voice, and brightening face. There was a long, ominous silence.

“It was in the business, my boy,” said he, at length, “It is gone, swept away with the rest. But I think God will let me live long enough to replace it,” he faltered.

“My *dear* father,” began Archie, “it is no matter —” but his head was throbbing violently. He grew very pale, and sat down, leaning on the table. His father was deeply touched with the blank wretchedness of the face, which, only ten minutes before, had been so full of life and hope.

“Archie,” said he, “you are young yet. In two or three years I am almost sure I shall be able to gratify you.”

“Two or three years? That is *forever*!” said fiery, impulsive Archie, to himself.

“I did hope, till only last week, that I need not disappoint you now, but then Philip suddenly decided that he, too, must go to college —”

“Philip? Philip?” cried Archie, springing to his feet, and fairly startling his father by his violent emotion. “Is *Philip* going?”

“Yes, Archie, my poor boy, I know it’s


hard. But you must try to bear it. I cannot refuse your mother anything, when she has so obliged me. Don't you see that it is right, Archie?"

"Perfectly right, father," said Archie, with a painful effort at self-control. "But I must go alone a little while to think it all over. It is so sudden!"

The poor boy hurried away, while his father, no less overcome, dropped his head in his hands.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SHADOW AWAKE.

HILIP! Philip!" repeated Archie, to himself. "And he does not care to go, — he does not like study. It is only because he grudged me this little happiness. I shall remember it all my life! I will never forgive him!"

The Shadow awoke; it sprang up like a strong man armed. Archie made no effort to put it down.

As he passed the breakfast room, little Thumb caught sight of his face, stopped short in his breakfast of bread and milk, and a minute after, Archie felt the clasp of his warm little fingers. But, for the first time, he took no notice of the little brother. On he went to the garden, with the longest strides. Little Thumb's stout legs were put to their mettle.

Bettine was talking with Philip and Adeline,

at the fence. Philip smiled pleasantly as he appeared.

“Where are you going so fast? And what will you take for your seven-league boots?”

Rosette, the only animal ever known to dislike Archie, came snarling around his feet.

“Your sincerity is better than the double face of your master,” muttered Archie, bitterly, as, with a hasty nod, he was passing them all by.

But Bettine cried out with her cheerful voice, “Don’t be a bear, Archie. Tell us what your father said. So you are both going. Wont that be pleasant? Only we shall miss you so terribly!”

“Both going?” cried Archie, impetuously. “No, no, *no!*” Hasn’t Philip told you? *I* am not going.”

“How should *I* know?” said Philip, in quiet surprise; although he certainly had a hint to that effect, from his mother, the night before.

“Well then, Bettine,” said Archie, abruptly, “if I must tell the news, — father can’t afford to send us both, and Philip is the one to go!”

“Poor Archie!” murmured the Thumb,

caressing the cold hand he held, although he could not, in the least, understand the weight of bitter disappointment in those few simple words.

“You must allow me to correct you a little,” said Philip, courteously. “By saying ‘father can’t afford to send both,’ I am afraid you are giving Bettine an impression that I am keeping you at home, whereas I have nothing to do with it. I am going on my own money, — at my own expense.”

“I beg your pardon, Philip,” cried Archie, quite carried away. “You have no property as yet, it is your mother’s. She has invested it as she saw fit, and receives regularly the highest rates of interest. This income she has been in the habit of spending very freely, — of course she has a right to do what she pleases with it, — but after other expenses are deducted, there wouldn’t be half enough to keep you at college. My father then supplies the deficiency. Was I so very much out of the way?”

“How do you know all this?” asked Philip, still retaining his composure, “I should like your proofs.”

“I have seen my father’s books,” cried Archie.

“I should not like to say you were wilfully misrepresenting —” began Philip.

“I should not like to have you!” cried Archie, coming a step nearer; his blue eyes had become almost black, and a little spark of fire seemed burning in the centre. It was the Shadow looking out from them.

“Archie! Archie!” cried Bettine, the tears springing to her eyes, “don’t, *don’t* look so!”

Archie struggled violently with his enemy, but felt that he was failing. “If I speak again I am lost,” thought he, desperately; and a longing came over him to hide himself in the deepest, darkest recesses of those cool pine woods. *There* would be safety and peace.

“He thinks it best to give up a poor cause,” laughed Philip, as Archie turned. “But don’t run away, — you generally show better fight. After him, Rosette, and bring him back!”

Rosette sprang forward, with a low growl.

Archie’s head was in a whirl,—the world seemed spinning round. He turned and spoke threateningly, to the persistent animal, following him with such irritating growls and snaps.

“ Back, back ! ” cried he passionately.

“ At him, Rosette,” said Philip again, with a laugh, echoed by the whole thoughtless party, as Rosette, obediently, made another lunge at his heels.

— Archie stopped, picked up a large, sharp stone, and deliberately sighted Rosette's head.

“ Stop, stop ! ” cried Philip, who well knew his true eye, and unerring aim.

But it was too late. There was a whiz through the air,—the sharp missile struck just where Archie intended — the luckless Rosette gave one sharp yelp, and fell upon the ground.

They all ran to the spot, Bettine pushing off a loose board, and coming through the fence.

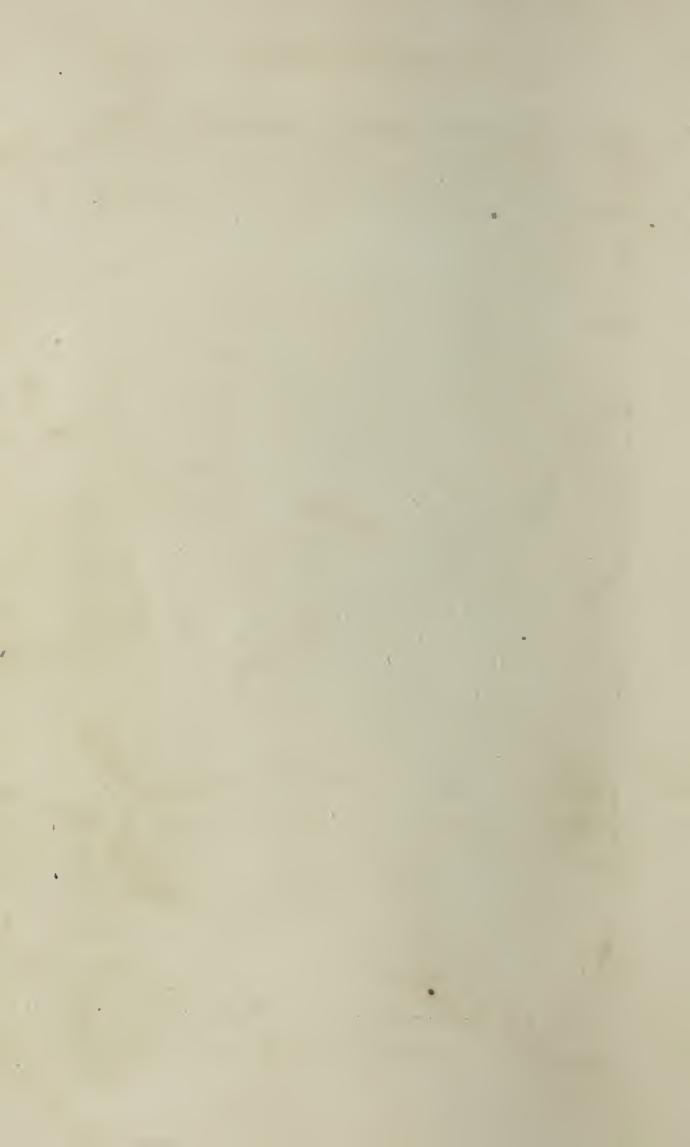
“ He hasn't killed him ? ” asked she anxiously.

Philip made no answer, as with some water, hastily brought from the fountain, he bathed the poor animal's head, and poured some in his mouth. But it was all in vain, a few more quivers of the light, graceful limbs, and Rosette lay very still, his loves and hates over forever.

A perfect hush came over the little party. Archie stood leaning against a tree, with folded



"He hasn't killed him?" asked she, anxiously. - PAGE 88.



arms and mouth tightly compressed; while Thumb, his baby mouth quivering with astonishment and grief, never moved his eyes from his brother's face.

"What do you think of such an act, Bettine?" said Philip, breaking the silence at last.

"Cowardly!" cried Bettine, and the next minute she would have liked to cut out her tongue. Hadn't she known Archie long enough to be sure that he was suffering tortures now? It was cruel to add a feather's weight to the remorse she knew he was feeling.

But Archie had heard. "Cowardly!" he repeated in a confused way. What did it mean? He could not just remember, but he could look it out in the dictionary some time. In the mean time he must set it down in his mind somewhere. Bettine said "*cowardly*."

As for Philip, in the midst of his regret for the loss of Rosette, he was conscious of some consolation. It is a humiliating weakness of human nature, that we are not at all unwilling to have our good points brought into bolder relief by the faults of others. Philip felt a secret satisfaction in having his superiority so clearly

shown before Bettine that day. He could almost forgive Archie,— Archie, who had been his own worst enemy.

In the meantime Adeline had been preparing some of her platitudes.

“ It is a very dreadful thing to give way to passion,” she said. “ It led to the first murder, of course, and every one that has happened since. Not that I mean that Archie has been as bad as Cain,” she added, hastily, “ of course he isn't quite Rosette's brother.”

In spite of herself, Bettine turned away to laugh.

“ But he has shown much the same spirit. Still we ought not to set ourselves too much above him. If we are not blinded with passion we should be thankful, but humble too ; and we ought to try to forgive Archie. How often shall we forgive our brother, till seven times ? Yes, till —”

“ O, don't be such a humbug, Adeline,” said Philip, impatiently.

Archie's hands were clenched tighter, as he still leaned against the tree.

“ But Archie has had a great deal to try him

to-day," continued Adeline, with patient sweetness. "We *must* try to be considerate —"

Archie turned and fled. This was hardest of all to bear — this taking of his part by Adeline. It wasn't enough that Bettine was against him, but Adeline must be *for* him. He could not go fast enough to get away from it all.

On and on he hastened, till the pine-trees stretched out their fragrant arms, and he rushed into the coolness and seclusion, almost with a sob. Still on he went till he had penetrated the very depths. It was almost with a feeling of surprise, in his excited state of mind, that he found nature did not seem to despise him, — she did not withhold one of her gifts. The flowers did not turn their innocent faces from him, — the birds, singing of God's love, did not stop, — between the strophes, — to chirp and gurgle over his infirmities. No, the forest could not have given more of sweetness, and perfume, and song, if their visitor — instead of remorseful Archie — had been the beloved disciple coming to dream of heaven.

With a long sigh of relief at finding himself at last, alone, he dropped upon a bed of moss,

to think over the weary, disgraceful morning. But *was* he alone? There was certainly a slight rustle behind him, and turning quickly, Archie caught a glimpse of little Hop o' my Thumb trying to dodge behind a tree.

The quick tears sprang to Archie's eyes. How this innocent child loved him! — this little brother, who remembered heaven, and was trying to find his way back to his Father's house! His faithful little heart then, had not been turned away by that cruel act. But he must not let him stay.

“You must go back, dear little Thumb,” said he, drawing him from his hiding-place, and tenderly smoothing back the flaxen curls from his red, heated face. “Archie is going a long way farther into the woods, and Thumb would get so tired.”

“No, I wouldn't, Archie, *dear* Archie. Do let me stay. I love you more than anybody.”

“But I shan't get back to dinner, and Thumb would be cruelly hungry; and then I couldn't say a word to amuse him, for my head beats like the great trip-hammer we saw the other day.”

“I won’t bother, not a bit,” pleaded little Thumb. “I won’t speak a word.”

“No, he must go,” said Archie, firmly, setting him face homewards, and pushing him gently.

Little Thumb went a short distance, and then stealthily turned. Archie was watching him, and shook his head.

“You must go, little Thumb,” said he. And then with a strange, morbid impulse to try the child’s affection to the utmost, he added, — “What if I should pick up a *stone* !”

Archie had a horror of himself while he said it, but the words fairly leaped from his mouth.

Little Thumb replied with an angelic smile, running back with outstretched arms: “You couldn’t frighten me, Archie, I know you wouldn’t hurt *me*.”

Archie caught the little brother to his heart with a quick, sobbing breath, which the child couldn’t in the least understand. Hurt him? what words could express the tenderness with which he loved him! what would he not suffer himself to save that little heart one throb of pain!

But presently, he gently put him from him. It would not be right to cloud his sunny spirit with the gloom which this day must bring to Archie.

“ You must go, now,” said he, kissing him once more. “ If little Thumb loves me, he will go straight home.”

It was the last resistless argument. The child turned away with a quivering lip. Archie watched his drooping head, with the curls now and then brightening into gold, where the sunshine dripped through the leaves. Then came one imploring glance at the turning, — so cruel to refuse ; but Archie hardened himself, and shook his head. Then there was a little clatter of feet by the stony margin of the brook, fainter, fainter, — little Thumb was really gone.

“ Now I am alone ;” said Archie, with a long, painful sigh. “ All alone with my Shadow !”

For he did not attempt to deny it to himself, — the Shadow was alive, and had shown itself stronger than ever before. He would not have thought it possible a few hours before, that he

could have done such a cruel thing as the killing of poor Rosette! All the tenderness and manliness of his nature recoiled from the deed. And to think that he, with human reason, had lowered himself to the level of beasts, had so resented a poor dog's harmless snapping and growling.

“ Though it was not *that* made me so angry,” said Archie, searching for some alleviation; “ it was not the dog, but the insults of his master.”

But did that make it any better? Wasn't it only more frightful when he came to think of it? Hadn't he, for a minute, almost identified Rosette with his master? Didn't the stone fly with an added vigor and deadliness, under inspiration of the thought? He did not dare to think of it. To give Philip pain — to revenge himself upon Philip — that had been the ruling motive. What good angel had kept him from throwing the stone at Philip, instead of Rosette? He dropped his head in his hands, in utter self-humiliation and horror.

“ But I had a terrible disappointment this morning,” he pleaded with himself. “ No one knows just how great it was. I was almost beside myself with grief.”

“It was a great weakness,” returned his relentless higher self, “to be so easily overcome. Great souls suffer and are *strong*. A courageous heart might have been staggered for a moment, by such a blow, but it would have immediately busied itself finding some other road to the accomplishment of its ends. And was it not very unjust to be so angry with Philip, simply because he had the same desires which you consider so praiseworthy in yourself? If you had only come out of your father’s room, determined to bear it bravely, if you had laughed with the rest, over Philip’s speeches, and met all the little provocations, calm and unmoved, like a rock buffeted by the harmless sea-waves, — how much more you would have respected yourself — how they must all have respected you! As it was, you heard but one voice, — you surrendered yourself without a struggle, to be the slave of the Shadow!”

Archie flung himself back upon the moss, and wept in the bitterness of his heart.

“I can never be anything nor do anything, till I first conquer my Shadow. ‘It resteth in the bosom of fools.’ O, how true! And I

must begin instantly, or it will darken my whole life. What must I do first?"

His thoughts reverted to Philip. "Down, Shadow! down!" he cried, between his teeth. "Philip I have injured. Is there any way to make amends?"

He thought busily. He had some money long laid by for the expenses of that picnic, which for one reason or other, had been postponed from time to time. He also knew a dog-fancier in the city, who, for extravagant prices, sold the most valuable breed of dogs.

"I shall buy him one," cried Archie. "I shall find the very twin of Rosette. Perhaps it will lack Rosette's chief virtue; it will not hate me, at first, but Philip can soon train him."

Another suggestion of the Shadow. How cunning he was! Archie realized it with sorrowful indignation.

"This is contemptible," he cried. "I will not allow myself to do Philip such injustice."

Next he passed on to Bettine. What was that she said? O, *cowardly*! He did not need a dictionary, now, as he grew very warm, and then shivered a little.

“It is a strong word. I think she need hardly have said it; and yet, it is a word they use in such cases, I think,” said poor Archie, trying to look at the subject with all fairness and candor. “When a person in anger, kills or injures some defenceless thing, inferior to himself, they call the action *cowardly*! Bettine was right,” was the stern, impartial judgment. Archie scorned to spare himself.

“And what can I do about that? Nothing but apologize, and try to act so in future, that she may gradually learn to trust me again. She looked as if she were half afraid of me just one minute. Ah! how my head aches. I wonder if she saw the Shadow? how I hate it! I have tried to be so careful before Bettine. This is the first time it has ever really fallen between us.”

Thus Archie's thoughts drifted from one painful subject to another, till, at last, his throbbing head, added to the excitement and sleeplessness of the past week, was too much for him. One minute he thought himself wide awake, gazing at the trees tossing up their graceful arms to the blue sky, — the next, all

was lost in peaceful mist, and unhappy Archie was asleep.

Morning passed, and the afternoon shadows were growing long, before he awoke, opening his eyes slowly, in the delicious languor following all that passion and pain. He tried instinctively to postpone the moment of thorough consciousness, but louder and louder grew the drip of the waterfall, and the shrill cry of the locust. Besides he gradually became conscious of a feeling of oppression at his breast, and a strange numbness of one of his hands. Something was clinging to it,—perhaps a poisonous reptile, or a snake! Raising himself with a sudden effort, he was quite confounded to find his hand tightly clasped in a row of little brown fingers, while upon his breast lay the tangled curls and rosy cheeks of little Hop o' my Thumb! The child roused himself at Archie's exclamation, looking at him with sweet, sleepy eyes.

“Bad little Thumb! Have you been here all day? haven't you been home at all? didn't you mind me?” cried Archie, speaking as severely as he could.

“I don't remember,” said little Thumb, with delightful unconcern.

“Yes you do, you haven’t been home, you haven’t had any dinner; you’re a wicked little Thumb! a depraved, disobedient little Thumb!” cried Archie, but the tears were running down his cheeks.

Little Thumb listened with a charming smile, as if to the most extravagant praises.

“And what has he been doing all day?”

“Gardens,” said Thumb, concisely, pointing to a little collection of twigs and stones, “and fishing till Archie went to sleep, and then I came and kept the flies off of him, and took care of him.”

“You didn’t go to sleep yourself?” smiled Archie.

“Dear me, no!” said the Thumb, “not a wink.”

“Well, we must hurry home now,—but what has become of your stockings and shoes?”

The Thumb was embarrassed.

“They hurt me,” said he, shyly, and he tried to draw out of sight a small pair of feet, red, and sadly blistered with the long, rough way. How they had toiled to keep up with Archie’s long strides!

Archie frowned. "This is too bad! Why didn't you mind me? Do you think I can ever again love such a wicked Thumb?"

"O, yes!" cried little Thumb, with another smile of adorable serenity.

Archie could resist no longer. He held out his arms, and the tired child clambered up, leaning his head on his shoulder. And so they came home in the soft September sunset, the happy Thumb riding right royally, with his rosy cheek pressed close to Archie's.

As they drew near the scene of the morning's passion, Archie's cheeks began to burn. The task before him was neither easy nor pleasant; but he must cling to his resolutions. The Shadow had greatly disfigured his past, he must not let it stretch its ugliness into the future. He must mortify it now, and kill it.

Mrs. Moppet was standing in the door, looking anxiously for them.

"Ah, Master Archie," said she, reproachfully, "we have all been so worried, though we was pretty sure Master Wilfred would be with you, somewhere. Where have you been all day? But how tired and pinched-like you look! Come right in here."

She brought him in the kitchen, where was a bright fire, not unwelcome, for a chill mist was following the heat of the fall day. A bit of roast chicken, some nicely browned potatoes, and a spoonful of the reddest currant jelly, speedily brought little Thumb down from the heights of self-sacrifice, and transformed him into a quite common-place, hungry little child. Archie followed more slowly.

“You are so down-hearted, Master Archie,” said Mrs. Moppet, as he presently pushed away his plate, “and I know jest what it’s all about.” Her full round face, was red with sympathy. “I hope you wont think I was meddlin’, but I was weedin’ the flowers under the libery window, when your pa spoke to you this morning, and I saw that your heart was quite broke. It’s dreadful hard for you, when everybody says that you have such talons. I’m sure you’d have took the first prizes at the school, and the contradictory besides, which is a great honor, isn’t it, my dear?”

Archie nodded, with a smile. “But don’t let us say anything more about it, Mrs. Moppet. It is all given up, you know.”

“That’s jest what I *don’t* know,” said the good woman, her eyes twinkling, as she rose and went toward the cupboard.

She was rather a heavy body. The whole kitchen vibrated with the movement, or rather, as Archie fancied, everything seemed to be in pleasant, active sympathy with each motion of the comfortable old soul. The bright skimmer on the wall, seemed to nudge the twinkling tin pails, and wink and dimple,—“There she goes! bless her!” while the strainer and iron spoons rattled tremulous applause upon their hooks.

Back she came, bearing triumphantly, a broken-nosed teapot.

“Now there’s nobody here but ourselves,” said she, drawing up close to Archie; “I sent Susan and Jane on a goose-chase, a purpose. Now what should you say was in this ere teapot?”

“Tansy or catnip,” said Archie, laughing.

“Guess again,” cried Mrs. Moppet.

“Maple sugar?” ventured Hop o’ my Thumb.

“Sweeter than that,” said Mrs. Moppet, “and has made a deal more happiness.”

“ Ah, I have it ! ” said Archie, mischievously, drawing his chair nearer. “ It’s love-letters ! ”

“ Ah, Master Archie, do you think I’d be such an old fool ! Who would ever have sent me love-letters ? ”

If *I* had been a young man about thirty years ago, I should have sent you a bushel,” laughed Archie.

“ O, you’ll never guess it,” cried the old woman, blushing like a girl. “ I may as well show you.”

She shook the teapot over her broad apron, and out rolled innumerable little brown paper bundles, which being made to disgorge, in their turn, disclosed a brilliant collection of silver, fractional currency, and some gold. Mrs. Moppet’s eyes danced at Archie’s astonishment.

“ You never suspicioned I was so rich, did you, Master Archie ? ”

She laughed till she fairly had to hold her sides, and pant for breath, while every kettle, dipper, and spoon was shaking in company.

“ How much is there, Master Archie, if you please ? ”

“Eighty-three dollars and ninety-one cents, almost eighty-four dollars,” said Archie, slowly.

She nodded her head. “I thought so, and there’s a matter of five dollars more, up stairs, in a stocking. And now, Master Archie, if I might be so bold, — if you would make me so proud and happy —” her voice trembled with eagerness. “But I may as well say it right out, I want you to take this all for your own, and go to collidge with it! There, I’ve done it.”

“O, Mrs. Moppet!” cried Archie, greatly embarrassed. The idea of going to college on eighty dollars, was so comical, and the kindness was so touching. “You are so very kind. I cannot thank you enough. But then I couldn’t possibly consent to take every cent you have in the world.”

“I don’t need it, Master Archie, not the least. I’ve food and raiment more ’n I want. Please say you’ll take it. My heart is just set on your goin’, and showin’ everybody what a Falconer can do. They’ve always took uncommon quick to learnin’, the Falconers. You’ll turn out a much finer scholar than Master Philip.”

She was so eager, and full of pride and satisfaction. It was very hard to tell the generous soul that this sum, which looked like a fortune to her, would be only a drop in the bucket of his necessary expenses. But there was no other way, and with a great deal of circumlocution he managed to make her understand what, at first, her mind wholly refused to believe.

The poor old creature's face was full of mortification. "And I've had my disappointment too, to-day," she said, fairly in tears. "I don't know but it's 'most as big as yourn."

"I believe it," cried Archie, taking her large red hand. "You have shown the biggest, kindest heart in the world! I shall always remember it."

She shook her head disconsolately; but presently looked up with a new idea.

"If you'd jest promise to take it anyhow, Master Archie, and let it go as far as it would toward some heart's desire—I think I could feel more consigned."

"Could you?" cried Archie, with the smile which unconscious Moppet thought made him more charming than a fairy prince.

“Then you’ll take it, Master Archie, *wont* you?” pleaded she, brightening.

“I must tell you my plans, dear old Moppet,” said Archie. “I am going to earn some money by teaching, and some other ways, and if I cannot get quite enough, then I shall come to you to make it up. I’d rather, though, have you keep it for me, till I want it.”

Mrs. Moppet sighed. “Well, whichever, and whatever you like best, Master Archie; but now I’ll show you where I keep it, — jest here, see, behind the broken platter, and the salt-pot. Did you hear anything?” said she, with a little start, turning quickly. “I thought some one turned the blind a little!”

Archie ran to the window. “Not a soul there, Mrs. Moppet,” he reported.

“I don’t really suspect there was. But there’s one bad thing about too much money, Master Archie, — it is apt to give the healthiest people the nervous, or whatever they call it. Now you must come here jest when you please. It’s all yourn, unless you’re a mind to leave five or six dollars or so, for an alpacey dress I shall want by and by. You needn’t bother to

tell me when you take it, or what you do with it. I can trust you, Master Archie, whatever you do will be right."

"I'm afraid you don't know what I did this morning," said Archie, with a painful blush.

"As if I'd heard anything else all day;" cried Mrs. Moppet, indignantly. "Such a clatter as they've raised, — and burying Rosette under the big tree as grand as any human! And Miss Bettine, too, she needn't have stood round looking so solemn, she'd ought to have known it was an accident!"

"It *wasn't*, Mrs. Moppet —"

"But that Bob Leighton," interrupted the faithful Moppet, afflicted with sudden deafness, "he's a funny chip! All day long there's been a string of ragamuffins here with dogs — such low ill-bred creatures! little bull dogs, — some of 'em with only one eye, — little dogs without tails, lame dogs, humbly yellow beasts — there's jest been no end to 'em. And every one said they'd been told Master Philip was in want of a dog, and their'n would be jest the one to suit him! Of course that was Bob Leighton. Mr. Philip got pretty mad toward the last, and

once when there was four tied right under his window, a yelpin' and tearin', he jest threw down his chaney water pitcher right in the midst." The old woman chuckled. "I was sorry for the poor hungry beasts though, and when I untied 'em I gave 'em each a bone. I'll tell you what, Master Archie, there's nothing can say 'thank you,' plainer than a dog's tail!"

Archie had grown very sad and silent again, but Mrs. Moppet, wrapped in her own thoughts, did not notice it.

"Miss Adeline sent for Bob, this afternoon," she chuckled again, "and gave him a track on Aniseed and Samphire, leastways, I think that's the name Bob told me. He took it so polite, it would have done your heart good, but law sakes, when her back was turned, he jest went home all the way on his head, and I'm pretty sure he made bobs to his kite with it. I s'pose I'd oughtn't to say nothing against Miss Adeline," said she, a little troubled, "she goes to church very regular, and she seems to make a powerful effort to be good; but there's an unfortinet way about her, — it almost seems as if she sets folks against religion, sometimes. Don't you think so, Master Archie?"

“I must not judge Adeline in anything,” said Archie, sadly, “she is far better than I.”

“That may, or may *not* be,” said Mrs. Moppet, quickly. “But as for this morning, Bob says you must have been terribly badgered. Mr. Philip was so aggravatin’ —”

“O, hush, Mrs. Moppet!” said Archie, rising hastily. “I cannot let you say a word against Philip. I had no reason to be angry with him, and after — after Rosette was dead, he was very generous and forbearing. Good night, Mrs. Moppet!”

He caught up little Thumb, who had long been nodding in his chair, and hastened away, before the partial old woman could put in a disclaiming word.

CHAPTER VII.

UNDER FOOT.



THE next morning, Archie had made quite a journey before the breakfast hour, which — on account of Mr. Falconer, who was something of an invalid — was generally very late.

Philip was standing at the gate, as he came up, red and heated, with a basket on his arm; he turned away coolly.

“Wait a minute, please,” cried Archie, hastily. “Philip, I acted most shamefully, yesterday. I was very unreasonably angry because you were going to college, and I was *not*. But I proved that I didn’t deserve such a happiness. I need just such a heavy disappointment for a discipline;” he tried to smile. “And Philip, do you think you can forgive me for my cruel, outrageous act; and will you prove it by accepting this?”

He opened the basket, and out sprang a dog, almost the image of Rosette, only, if anything, it was handsomer.

“Of course,” said Philip, quietly, “I forgive you, I did that yesterday.”

“Thank you! thank you!” cried Archie, impulsively, feeling, in the fulness of his gratitude, that he could almost embrace him.”

“But you must excuse me from taking the dog. I shall never care for another as I did for Rosette. Thank you very much; but I consider the loss irreparable.”

Archie was perfectly stunned. So he could not atone for his sin! his passion had led him to commit an injury which could not be repaired—he must be in debt to Philip all his life!

“I think I should have taken it, in similar circumstances, whether I wanted it or not,” sighed Archie to himself, with one more appealing glance at his companion.

But the handsome face was quite impassible, as, — fastening a sprig of mignonette in his coat, — with a courteous smile, Philip turned toward the house.

“Down!” cried Archie to his enemy. “I have no right to be angry because Philip did not want the dog, and simply had the frankness to tell me so. Would *you* like him, Wilfred?” he asked of the child, who had come running out with many expressions of wonder.

“I would rather have a cunning little terrier,” said Thumb, “with a little lock of hair over his funny nose.”

“That would be better,” said Archie, hastily; this dog was too painfully like Rosette. “We will change him this very day.”

Which was accordingly done, and the happy Thumb named his new possession — “Crib.”

The next thing Archie took upon himself, was to return Adeline’s Bible, which he had found upon his bureau, marked in several places.

“He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.”

“The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his *glory* to pass over a transgression.”

“Seest thou a man that is hasty in his

words? there is more hope of a *fool* than of him."

These were only a few of the soothing applications, which Adeline had prepared for the mote in her brother's eye.

The flush of impatience with which Archie first read them, had quite died away when he met her a few hours afterwards in the hall.

"She has tried to be faithful and kind," said he, resolutely. "It is only my pride that rebels against her way of doing it."

"Adeline," said he, aloud. "I ought to thank you for taking my part, yesterday, and also for this subsequent kindness;" he held out the book, with a smile.

"I did not think you would know who did it," said she, complacently. (As if any one could mistake the tact of Adeline!) "But I want to tell you, Archie, that I am always your friend. Even the display of your ungovernable passion, yesterday, did not alienate me; I only felt a profounder pity, and desire" —

"Thank you! thank you, Adeline!" cried Archie, beating a most abrupt retreat. Did other people have to struggle so desperately

with their shadows? He caught his hat and rushed from the house, nearly falling over Bettine, who was coming up the steps. He was not in the happiest frame of mind to meet her.

“But it had better all be over,” he said to himself. “Bettine,” he continued, taking off his hat, “I most humbly apologize for the pain I gave you yesterday. My conduct was inexcusable; you called it by just the right word; thank you for showing me myself so clearly. I hope some time you will be able to forgive me, and like me again.”

He spoke very rapidly in his emotion, in short, disjointed sentences. “How deeply I have wounded him!” thought Bettine.

“I am sure, Archie,” she began, “*I* have nothing to forgive” —

Archie bowed very low, and was gone. Judging from the morning’s experience, it was not safe to hear the conclusion of the answer.

“But *you* have not forgiven *me*!” said Bettine, looking after him with tearful eyes.

That same afternoon, Adeline, calling on Harriet Bunscombe, was surprised to hear that

Archie had applied for a situation as teacher, in her father's school.

"He has some plan of being very independent, I believe," said Harriet, "and working his way through college. And father says it wont hurt him at all to brush up a little on the rudiments."

"I am afraid Archie is rather young for the position," added Mrs. Bunscombe. "Some of our boys are exceedingly trying, — he will need the greatest self-control and patience. He has plenty of that, I hope," said she, noticing that Adeline elevated her eyebrows.

Adeline communed with herself. Would it be right to deceive Mrs. Bunscombe? "I would prefer to have you ask some one else," said she, at last.

Mrs. Bunscombe immediately saw there was something to tell; and, anxious for the well-being of the school, she drew Adeline on with a few skilful questions.

Adeline loved being of importance; she loved telling a story, especially where there was opportunity to sigh over some one's faults; and, in a very short time, Mrs. Bunscome was in

possession of full particulars concerning the episode of Rosette.

Scarcely had she finished the recital, when Ned Bunscombe appeared from some dark corner, where he had been unnoticed. His face was very red, and he was muttering something that sounded like — “mean! dishonorable!”

Adeline rose uneasily. Ned was a great friend of Archie’s.

“I hope it is not going to make any difference with Archie,” she said. “But when I am asked direct questions, *I* have been taught to think it ‘dishonorable’ not to tell the truth.”

Ned was opening his mouth, in reply, but his mother stopped him. Nevertheless as Adeline lingered in the hall-door with Harriet, she heard him say, —

“But mother, Archie is certainly just as quick in everything else as he is in his temper; he would make a splendid teacher, and father would be very fortunate to get him.”

“I’m afraid it would be better to take someone who knows less,” replied Mrs. Bunscombe. “We had so much trouble with that passionate

Mr. Carr! Don't you remember, several of the younger boys were taken from the school?"

Adeline went home very uneasy, trying, in vain, to strengthen herself with the idea that she had done her duty.

As they all sat in the library that evening, she could see that Archie was anxiously expecting something, and in time, she became as restless as himself. Redder and redder grew his cheeks, as the clock struck the hours and half hours, till, at last, it was ten o'clock, and Archie, with a long sigh, was just rising to go to his room, when Susan came in with a couple of notes.

Adeline watched him with fascination, as he eagerly tore them open. She did not, at first, understand why there were two.

He read them, his mouth gradually settling into a hard, straight line, — a hieroglyphic which Adeline easily deciphered, — he had been refused! She dropped her eyes on her book, and did not dare to raise them, till he had gone slowly out of the room.

But he was waiting for her, as she came up the stairs, looking very grave and patient, with

all the red gone out of his cheeks. He was holding a little book.

“Did you ever happen to see *this* verse, Adeline?” said he very gently.

Adeline looked down and read simply this.

“Life and death are in the power of the tongue!”

It was enough! That second note must have been from Ned Bunscombe!

Adeline truly had not meant to do him this harm, nor, worst of all, to have him find out just the part she had taken. In spite of her fancied superiority, she cared more for Archie's good opinion than that of anybody's else. But Archie had not a word of condemnation, — his own sin had been too recent. Adeline looked up, deprecatingly, only to meet a kind, grave smile; and, bursting into tears, she ran into her own room.

“Archie,” began his father, a few days after, “I know you do not wish to be idle —”

“O, no, father,” cried Archie, eagerly, “I am looking for a situation as school-teacher. I have had one or two disappointments, but I think I have heard of an opening now. I don't

mean to be a burden to you any longer, father ; I am going to try and educate myself."

" You do not want to be a burden, Archie, but what if I should ask you to be a *help* ? "

Archie looked up, inquiringly.

" One of my clerks has been ill a long time, and is on the point of leaving me ; my son Archie is well qualified to take his place, and it would relieve me greatly in my embarrassments, if he were willing to do it, and give up his own plans for a year or two."

Archie turned very red, and looked down.

" A year or two," his father said, but *he* feared it would be deciding his destiny for life. If he once began, what should keep him from being drawn farther and farther into the busy whirlpool ? And what a contrast to all his wonderful dreams ! His plans had been vague, but he had meant perhaps to be an author, and leave behind him some grand book, — the harvest of a life of noble thoughts. Or perhaps a lawyer, arguing for the right, in words that thrilled men's hearts. And now must his brain shrivel away in a counting-room ? Must his grand volumes be labelled " day-book " or

“ledger?” The ambitious young spirit rebelled fiercely for a moment. And yet how weary his father looked, as he sat there awaiting his decision, how dispirited! And Archie could do something to lighten the load, which was making him prematurely old. He could not refuse to go, and perhaps — *perhaps* it might not be forever!

“I will do it father!” cried he, explosively.

“Cheerfully? Archie.”

“Cheerfully!” responded Archie, a little huskily perhaps.

His father’s smile and warm grasp of the hand repaid him fully for the moment. It could not ward off, however, many a desperate sinking at heart, which attacked him for weeks and months afterwards.

Upon the very day that Philip waved his handkerchief triumphantly, from the train bearing him away to college, — Archie began the burdensome and monotonous life in his father’s office. It seemed very bitter. In spite of his resolutions, he could hardly allow himself to think of Philip, at first, — Philip, who was soon writing such gay letters home, which Ade-

line would read in the evening, when Bettine came in with her bit of fancy work. How the two girls would laugh over them, while Archie, struggling to be just and generous, would force himself to admire them too.

But he could not seem quite his old, lively self. There was especially a very evident restraint between him and Bettine; it began upon the morning when Rosette was killed.

“She thinks me cowardly, and I have done nothing yet to prove her wrong,” Archie would think sorrowfully, when they met.

“He will never forget it,” Bettine in turn, would say to herself. No wonder, she thought, that he so deeply felt the cruel word coming from one to whom he had never shown anything but kindness. Of course they could never be quite the same to each other again. Had not Adeline told her with what emotion Archie had thanked *her* for having taken his part! “He seemed to feel as if I were his only friend,” Adeline had said. How Bettine longed to tell him better, and confess to him that she had been too hasty upon that day! But it was such a painful subject to approach—it seemed almost impossible.

These evenings, however, which so greatly tried Archie's patience, were not destined to last forever. One night, towards the end of the winter, — it was the night for Philip's weekly letter, — Archie ran in to Grandfather Leighton's.

"You are not happy," said the old man, looking at him earnestly, as he was hammering away at a broken chair, after his busy, restless fashion.

"O, no!" said Archie, quite as a matter of course.

"I hope the Shadow has nothing to do with it. How are those candles? burning brightly?"

"Don't speak of the candles!" cried Archie, with an impatient gesture. "Adeline gives me a half dozen every week."

"Ah, I see," said Grandfather Leighton; "and then the Shadow rises in a trice, and snuffs them all out!"

"I suppose so," laughed Archie.

"Adeline too often uses words without knowledge," murmured the old man. "Well, let the candles go, and come direct to the sun. Is *that* shining on you, Archie?"

Archie hammered away with increasing energy.

“If you want to know about the Shadow, Grandfather Leighton,” he said, presently, “I think I am conquering it. I’ve made the strongest resolution —”

Grandfather Leighton shook his head. “I would rather hear you say something else, Archie. I shall never feel safe till you come and say — ‘I have asked a great Friend to help me, and I shall conquer. My trust is not in the resolution I have made, but in the hand I hold.’”

Archie looked troubled.

“Archie! Archie!” cried little Thumb, rushing in, followed by Crib. “Who do you think has come? Philip! he’s come back from College!”

“How does that happen?” said Archie. “It isn’t vacation.”

“He is sick; he has hurt his foot; but he feels gay, I can tell you, and they are all very glad to see him. Do come, Archie, he tells such funny stories!”

Archie went slowly back. The library

looked very pleasant as he entered ; there was a glowing fire in the grate, and Philip was lying upon a sofa in front, a little table with biscuits, cold chicken, and jellies, drawn to his side. Grouped around him, admiringly, were Mrs. Falconer, Adeline and Bettine, listening, with merry peals of laughter, to his lively pictures of college life, and the tricks that were played on the freshmen.

“ You are back rather unexpectedly,” said Archie, coming slowly forward.

“ Yes,” said Philip, “ but don’t be so overwhelmingly cordial ! it’s quite oppressive,” and he just touched the hand which Archie had slowly extended.

Bettine laughed, while Archie blushed that he had not been more generous in his welcome.

“ I shall make no further exhibition of my small-minded jealousy,” he said indignantly to himself ; and sitting down he took an animated part in the conversation, laughing appreciatively at every sally of Philip’s wit, even when it was at his own expense, mingled with somewhat irritating compliments upon the improvement in his disposition.

“I am glad I have had this trial to night,” he said, thoughtfully, when, at last he was alone in his room. “Grandfather Leighton seemed to doubt me, but I think I have proved my strength. This has been the hardest of all the hard evenings, and still I have conquered. I am still keeping my Shadow under foot.”

CHAPTER VIII.

UNDER FOOT, CONTINUED.



WEEKS passed; winter gave way to spring, and spring to summer; and Philip, happy, careless, unconcerned, was yet at home. Archie wondered, day after day, that he seemed to give himself no uneasiness about his studies.

“When are you going back, Philip?” he at length ventured to ask.

“Ah, hadn’t I told you!” said Philip, “I am not going at all, because —” he paused.

Philip had a peculiarity, which ought to have been mentioned before, — a way of beginning a sentence, then pausing, and leaving his hearer to wait an indefinite time for the most important half of the answer. This was especially irritating to a person of Archie’s disposition.

It is hard, on a winter’s day, to knock at some outer door, — to know that the people

within hear you, but that, sitting by their warm fires, they are quite indifferent how long they may keep you shivering in the wind and sleet. But harder yet, is it, if you hear a fumbling at the lock, if you almost feel the warm air from within, and then the person who might admit you, goes away in a fit of absence of mind, leaving you the choice of knocking again, or going away in despair. After this fashion Archie generally had to wait at the portal of Philip's mouth. He had tried to school himself to patience in the matter; he would begin to count rapidly in German or French, a hundred, two hundred, a thousand, sometimes; he kept difficult mathematical problems, which he attacked with fury in these moments; he recited Latin verses.

“Because —” continued Philip, slowly, upon the present occasion, “because —” he stopped to catch a fly upon the window-pane, “be-c-a-u-s-e —”

Archie began to whistle and draw on his gloves. “Good morning, Philip, it is time for me to go. Perhaps you will be good enough to finish that sentence to-night.”

“What a bomb-shell you are, Archie! Can’t you wait a half minute. I was going to say, because the physicians think I am not strong enough for such a course of study. I must have a more active life.”

The two boys looked steadily at each other a minute. Philip certainly showed no signs of failing health. Besides Archie had heard through Ned Bunscombe, some faint rumors of a college scrape, and that Philip’s coming home had not quite been a matter of his own volition. However, such accidents often happen, and Philip might probably have gone back in a few weeks, had he pleased. The true reason, was, as Archie already knew, that he hadn’t the slightest taste for such a life. But everything was kept very quiet. Adeline and Bettine received Philip’s explanation as a matter of course, and before long it seemed almost forgotten that he had ever tried the experiment.

But Archie’s dreams and ambitions revived in full force. Why would it not now be possible for him to go in the fall? Every night, through the beautiful month of June, as he escaped from the heated back office, and took

his way homeward, meeting little Thumb and Crib at a bend of the road,—his heart seemed overflowing with happiness. Life was very intoxicating again, and he would pour into the child's ears the most gorgeous pictures of what he meant to do, till the Thumb would clap his hands with excitement.

“And what have *you* been about, little Thumb?” he asked one day.

“O, playing, and going to see sick little Peter Crane, with Mrs. Moppet. I saved my strawberries for him; wasn't that right? Mrs. Moppet told me the Lord says, ‘Come ye blessed,’ to boys that go to see other sick little boys. Wouldn't Bettine say that was a ‘*crumb*,’ Archie? I'm pretty sure I'll find it some time when I'm looking for our Father's, and Mrs. Moppet thinks so too.”

He chuckled in innocent triumph, and was immediately off, helping Crib chase a belated butterfly.

Archie, for a moment, was touched with the contrast between his aims and those of his little brother. He, himself, was kind to the poor, but from no high and ruling motive; his deeds

of mercy and charity were only the almost unconscious impulses of a generous nature,—mere slight deflections in the strong current, setting toward *earthly* honors and triumphs; while little Thumb's leading thought, through all the distractions of marbles, tops, and kites,—was still how to find the way home to his Father's house.

Archie almost wished the idea had never entered the child's head. There was no sickly sentiment about Thumb, but his very practical, matter-of-fact way of speaking of that homeward journey, made it seem so real and possible; his eyes grew dim at the thought of how much would be gone from his life, if some day he should miss the touch of that little clinging hand.

But Archie turned quickly from these thoughts to something more pleasant. The Fourth of July was approaching, and there was to be quite an unusual celebration in the city, with speeches and music; and what was to make the exercises most deeply interesting, a handsome prize had been offered for the best original, patriotic poem.

Archie had determined to be one of the competitors from the very first. Night after night, coming home late and tired, he had seated himself at his beloved organ, Thumb upon one side, and Crib upon the other, and played till he had charmed away all sense of fatigue, and worked his excitable nature up to a kind of inspiration. Then snatching his pencil, he had dashed off a verse of his poem. Now, at last, it was finished; his whole heart had been in it; he could not read it without emotion. But what would the world say? he felt that he ought to have some one else's opinion, before offering it to the committee, and with much shrinking, he decided to put it to the test, before he slept that night.

He was coming home much earlier than usual, at that very moment, to join in a walk, which was to be taken in the woods, up the river road. He decided he would take the precious manuscript with him at once, and submit it to them all. Philip and Bettine both had very good taste in such things; and if Philip were a little severe, it would probably be just what he needed.

But they had taken a very long walk, and were already upon the return, before Archie, with burning cheeks, had mustered courage to act upon his decision.

“Will you listen to this a moment?” he cried, unfolding the document. “It was written by a person for the prize on the Fourth.”

“Yes,” said Bettine, laughing, “if a person will read loud and plain.”

“How quick she is,” thought poor Archie, as he began in a trembling voice.

It was a grand rodomontade, very enthusiastic and full of fire, but evidently written by some one very young. There were no comments made, however, till the second verse.

“The hearts with foreign power oppressed”

read Archie, a little more steadily, —

“Cry out with eager yearning,

‘We come! O, splendor-lighted West!

Where *freedom’s* fires are burning!

We hear thy voice of glorious pride,

From cot, from lordly manor,—

Oppression finds no place to hide,

Beneath Columbia’s banner! ’”

“Doesn't it?” asked Philip, dryly.

“Why, no,” said Archie, somewhat confused, “that is, poetically speaking. Of course, there's a little something wrong here and there, but we're making that all right as fast as we can.”

“Well, go on,” said Bettine, kindly.

“The next verse is an allusion to the war,” explained Archie.

“ ‘In vain with traitorous hearts allied,
War pours his fiery chrism,—
The stars and stripes shall, purified,
Rise from the fierce baptism!
Ah, sweet for God and right to share
The martyred braves' communion;
To breathe in death one deathless prayer—
‘God save the dear old Union!’ ”

“And then here is the chorus, Bettine,” continued Archie, his voice shaking again, — he felt it all so deeply.

“ ‘O, happy land,
Thy sons all stand
With hearts on fire for brave endeavor!
Shame ne'er shall bow
Thy star-crowned brow,
Hurrah! our native land forever!’ ”

“Hurrah!” cried little Thumb, while Crib barked wildly. If Archie had delivered himself of so much Greek, in the same grand tone and manner, the effect would have been precisely the same on the faithful pair.

Then followed a somewhat embarrassing silence. Poor Archie looked timidly at his critics.

“It strikes me,” said Philip, “that you have been a little too generous with the fuel for such warm weather. We strike *fire* almost every other line; it’s a perfect bundle of matches!”

Bettine laughed heartily, although a moment before she had been quite impressed.

“I believe you are right, Philip,” said Archie, his face crimson, but with a brave effort at control. “I was thinking myself that perhaps it would be better to say in the chorus — ‘with hearts *that yearn* for brave endeavor. Thank you, I’ll think of it. Will you hear the last verse?”

“Of course we will!” cried Bettine, touched with his humility, and already regretting her thoughtless laugh.

“‘Columbia! fairest of all lands!

What glory lies before thee!

Still lift on high imploring hands,
 See, heaven is smiling o'er thee!
Thou Conqueror, King, behold her bow,
 Bless Thou her fair oblations, —
So shall she ever sit, as now,
 A *Queen* among the nations!
For, happy land!
Her sons all stand,
With hearts that *yearn* for brave endeavor!"

Archie sprang to his feet in a fever of enthusiasm, his eyes glowing, his cheeks burning. It was one of those transformations that came to him sometimes. "How beautiful he is!" very plainly said the eyes of both Adeline and Bettine.

"Shame ne'er shall bow!
Thy star-crowned brow!
Hurrah! our native land *forever*!"

he finished, vociferously assisted by Bob, and little Thumb.

Bettine was quite carried away; she quite forgot her respect for Philip's wisdom and superiority in years, and did not wait, as usual, for his opinion.

"That is splendid, Archie!" she cried. "I don't believe there is anything you can't do!"

“Judging by that splurgy, boastful doggerel?” whispered Philip; but Archie’s start and quick color showed that he had heard it.

“Is that really your honest opinion, Philip?” said he, earnestly.

“Well,” began Philip, slowly. “Ah, Bettine, there is a caterpillar on your hat; shall I knock it off? There, what was I saying, — anything? O, yes — yes” —

Archie had seized a little stick, and was furiously beheading every daisy and dandelion within reach.

“The fact is, my dear fellow,” concluded Philip, at last, “I would advise you, as a friend, not to send it. It has some good points, but I am afraid it is open to a great deal of ridicule.”

“Unjust! Envious!” suggested the Shadow, struggling violently under Archie’s feet. A blur came before his eyes; he could not trust himself to speak, and so strode rapidly ahead.

“You cannot touch that boy’s vanity with a feather!” said Philip, looking after him.

“But do you really think the verses so poor?” asked Bettine, regretfully. “Archie has had so many disappointments lately” —

“O, they have *some* merit,” said Philip, carelessly, “the rhymes are strung together tolerably well; but it sounds so young, so *very* young!”

Bettine's face fell; she thought she had seen published verses so much worse, — but then Philip must know.

“What a nice poem *you* could write, Philip,” said she, reflecting upon his accomplishments and powers of criticism.

“Perhaps,” said he, modestly, but with a smile that said, — “Of course.”

“I wish you would try,” said Bettine.

“Do you?” said he, looking at the pretty, flushed face, admiringly. “Perhaps I will, then. I hardly thought it would pay; but the *queen's* wishes are commands!” and he gayly touched his hat, to Bettine's pleasurable confusion.

“Try it, Philip,” cried Bob Leighton, rolling before them on hands and feet, like a curious kind of wheel. “You couldn't begin to come up to Archie, to save your life!”

Philip took not the slightest notice of him. “Mind, Bettine,” he continued, “I don't say

but what Archie has talent, but I am afraid he will never do much with it, — he is an ill-balanced character; his hasty temper is always throwing him off the track. It is such a pity!”

“Yes,” murmured Adeline, putting in a complacent oar. “‘A city broken down, and without walls.’”

“O, gammon!” cried irreverent Bob. “But he’s a *city* after all, and the rest of you are little one-street villages by the side of him!”

Philip shrugged his shoulders. “It isn’t the last decision of the supreme court!” said he, quietly.

“And as for being without walls,” pursued Bob, reddening, “he hasn’t any walls of selfishness and meanness, like *some* people, that’s a fact! You can get right at him. You don’t any of you know Archie; but the poor folks do. Did you see his faded neck-tie, to-day, Bettine, and the patch on his boot? that meant a garden-chair for little Peter Crane! And I could tell you other things” —

“I am so glad,” said Adeline, in a low tone, joining herself to Bob. “I have so often talked with Archie upon this very subject, —

the duty and pleasure of 'lending to the Lord, — but he is so reserved, I could not tell whether my words had any effect or not. It is very pleasant, Bob, when you have cast bread upon the waters, to find it returning to you after many days."

"Fiddlesticks!" cried Bob. "I beg your pardon, I mean;" his mind was evidently becoming very chaotic. "So it is all owing to *you* that little Crane got the chair? Well, now Adeline, how much do you really think you ought to give to the poor?"

"Archie and I had a long talk about that, and I told him about the young man in the Bible, who was required to sell all that he had, and give to the poor."

"Was Archie willing to do that?" asked Bob, quickly.

"O, no! far, far from it."

"But, of course, *you* were," said Bob, his eyes twinkling.

"I hope so," said Adeline, meekly, if it were required" —

She stopped with a slight shriek; for, instead of Bob's merry head, a pair of stout shoes —

soles uppermost — were travelling on a level with her shoulder. The boy's mind had required the promptest measures for relief; he could bear no more.

Just then they rounded a little projection, and a clearing in the woods gave them a view of the river, shining like gold in the level rays of the descending sun. Under a tree overhanging the bank, sat Archie, busily contriving a fishhook for Thumb. His composure was quite restored. There had been a severe struggle with the Shadow, but it was still under foot; it did not trouble the beautiful smile with which he looked up, as they all ran to throw themselves by his side.

“Why did you run away, Archie?” asked mischievous Bob. “Don't you know it isn't safe to leave your *friends* behind you, — they talk about you.”

“But I left Bettine behind me,” smiled Archie. “I am willing to trust myself with Bettine.” But he looked at her very keenly, nevertheless.

Bettine colored deeply.

“Archie,” whispered Adeline, “you may

always be sure of *one*; there is one who *never* fails to take your part."

Archie's expression was not one of unmixed gratitude.

"Bob, why must you always be raising a tempest in a teapot?" cried Philip, languidly. "I proclaim a truce. Let us enjoy this luxury a few minutes, in peace!" he threw himself back upon the grass.

Restless Bob ran down the bank to help little Thumb in his fishing. The rest followed Philip's example, falling into day-dreaming, as they gazed on the pale summer sky, and the dim little islets up the river.

Suddenly, a piercing scream from Bettine, brought them all to their feet. A brown stump, just visible in the grass, upon which she had been leaning her elbow, had suddenly begun to move, and, before her horror-stricken eyes, it had expanded, unfolded; a slender, brilliant neck had curved towards her, and Bettine, expending all her energies in that one shriek, sat paralyzed and fascinated before the "coiled death!"

It was a formidable enemy. Philip hastily

drew his penknife, looking for a stout twig ; but before it could possibly be cut, the dart would have been made ! Archie sprang forward, with blazing eyes, catching the monster ; though, in his excitement, not quite so near the head as he intended ; there was room for a quick, enraged turn, swifter than lightning, and Archie felt a cruel pang just above his bared wrist.

“ It hasn’t bitten you ! ” exclaimed Philip, with unusual interest.

“ Yes, it has ! it has ! ” cried Bob, clambering up the bank, and turning very white. “ What *shall* we do ? it will kill him ! ”

There was the faintest exclamation from Bettine, which no one heard but Archie. He turned quickly, with one of those smiles, which were an illumination.

“ It is not of the slightest consequence, Tiny,” said he, (he had not called her Tiny for months,) and flinging the snake to the ground, he placed his heel on the writhing head, and held out his hand for Philip’s open knife.

Very coolly and deliberately he ran the sharp blade around the fang-marks, as if he had been

whittling a piece of wood instead of his own flesh and blood.

Bob drew a sharp, hard breath of admiration.

"I beg your pardon, Bettine," cried Archie, suddenly, catching sight of her colorless face.

"I have been very thoughtless and rough to do this right before you;" he hastily wrapped his handkerchief around it. "Please don't think any more about it."

"Is there any danger?" just whispered Bettine.

"No, — thank you for caring, — not the least! I think I have put a stop to that. But I must hurry home for something, — I think I will take the short cut. Don't let me spoil the party, — you must come home leisurely, — it would be a shame to lose this lovely evening."

"Doesn't it pain you very much?" again asked Bettine.

"O, no! no! Thank you, again. The merest pin-prick."

"Let me tie *my* handkerchief around it," said Adeline, who had gradually emerged from some thicket, where she had retreated at the first alarm. "I should feel it an honor," she insisted. "You really *must* let me."

Archie, with a sigh, submitted to have the useless little web of embroidery tied around, and then, with a quick wave of the hand, and a cheerful smile, he plunged into the woods. And after him, in spite of his entreaties, ran Bob, little Thumb, and Crib.

It was a most break-neck race over fences and fields, till, at last, they all arrived breathless, at a blacksmith's shop on the very outskirts of the city.

"Wait for me a minute, and keep little Thumb back," shouted Archie to his companions, somewhat in the rear.

But curious Bob pressed on. He saw Archie exchange a few hasty words with the workman, and then unwind his handkerchief, while the man took up a slender rod of red hot iron. The secret was out.

"He is going to burn the cut!" shuddered Bob, stealing out with creeping flesh.

But when Archie, in a few minutes, came walking out, pale, but perfectly unconcerned, even to the point of smiling at little Thumb, who had arrived a half minute too late, — Bob looked at him with a curiosity not unmixed with

veneration. For once in his life he was quite silent, as he walked on by Archie's side, thinking it all over. He should never feel quite satisfied with himself, he thought, till he had been placed in some very exciting, perilous circumstances, and had acted in a grand, heroic way, — in fact, just exactly like Archie.

In the meantime, the thoughts of the three, coming slowly down the river road, — were no less occupied with the same subject.

“To think that I could ever call Archie *cowardly*!” said Bettine, remorsefully.

“You certainly ought not to blame yourself for that,” replied Philip, “it was the right word in the right place. Archie has shown to-day, that kind of physical endurance and insensibility to pain, which is always very taking and fascinating. I don't wonder that you admire it, — everybody would do the same, — but he is entirely lacking in a higher kind of courage. You might chop him in pieces, and his pride would help him smile to the last; but only touch his vanity or self-love with the finest cambric needle — and lo! · tornado, whirlwind and earthquake!”

Bettine was displeased, especially as she could not help seeing a kind of half truth in Philip's judgment.

"I don't feel like finding fault with Archie, to-day," said she, slowly.

"Of course you don't," said Philip, warmly. "But Bettine, one thing more. I don't wish, in the least, to undervalue anything Archie has done, but there really was not the slightest necessity for his making such a martyr of himself. Noble impulses are very fine, but there is something better. Some one has said, 'If you are in imminent danger, and have two seconds given you to escape from it, spend *one* of those seconds in deciding the best course to pursue.' And then you can act with reason, and not senseless fool-hardiness. Now, Bettine, I hope you will not think I mean to exalt myself," he actually had the grace to blush slightly, "but in one of my seconds I had cut the twig, and in the next, I should have killed the snake without endangering anyone's life. It does not look near so grand, but wouldn't it have been truly the wisest action? I am not near so attractive as Archie, I confess," said

Philip, with some emotion, "but I hope you will see some good in me, and will try to feel that I would have done quite as much to save your life;" his voice trembled, as he added in a low tone, "and from a deeper reason than impulse, Bettine!"

Adeline stared. Humility was a new role for Philip, and she did not quite like his playing it with Bettine. Neither could she understand the charm which the girl seemed to have for her brother lately. She turned and looked at her, but was no wiser; the lovely blonde hair, clear eyes, and dimpled mouth, meant about as much to Adeline as would the speckled back of a toad. To Philip and Archie they meant—*more*.

In the meantime Bettine was saying very gratefully:

"Thank you! thank you, Philip! I'm quite sure you would;" and thinking,—"But there was only *one* second this time, I am sure. What would have become of me if it hadn't been for Archie's impulse!"

And it was quite evident, as Philip uneasily decided, from Bettine's absent manner, and kindling eye from time to time, that she was

thinking it over and over, and that Archie's courage and coolness had taken great hold on her imagination.

“I *must* write that poem!” was Philip's final conclusion. “She will forget all this if I can come to her with the prize.”

And so they dropped into silence, with the exception of Adeline, who from time to time remarked, complacently :

“I am very glad that *I* have always taken Archie's part.”

A statement which, for some reason, seemed to give but small satisfaction to either of her hearers.

CHAPTER IX.

STRATEGY.



THE next day was Sunday. There had been a sudden change in the weather and a heavy rain was falling from morning till night. Archie had been to church in the morning, and afterwards had played an hour or two on his beloved organ; but through everything his thoughts had continually reverted to the poem, with which he had associated so many visions of triumph. Philip's criticism had cast him down greatly, and yet he might be mistaken. It seemed impossible that verses written with tears in his eyes, and such a pounding at his heart, should not have some power to move others. At last he could not resist the temptation of taking them from his desk, revising and correcting them, and finally making a fair copy; for all the poems must be

handed in by ten o'clock the next morning. Nothing would be received after that.

Philip looked in upon him once, to say, —

“ Ah, working at your poem? *I* tossed a few lines together last night. Did you know we were to be rivals? ”

Archie smiled quietly; he was pretty sure Philip would shine less as a poet than a critic.

When it was at last finished, Archie be-thought himself of little Thumb, whom he had hardly noticed all day. Going in search of him, he entered the library, where his father sat, coughing a little, and leaning his head on his hand, in painful thought, as was his wont lately. Adeline, too, was reading a sermon to her mother, who had fallen asleep. But the dear, fair little head was *not* there, or it would not all have looked so gloomy. Archie hastened away, looking here and there, till finally he wandered down to the kitchen. Involuntarily he paused a minute at the half-open door, — such a bright, cheery picture met his eye! A small table, supporting two candles, (it was already dusk,) was drawn into the centre of the marvellously clean kitchen, and, on one side sat

little Thumb, gravely addressing a select audience of Mrs. Moppet and Crib, who sat, with equal dignity, upon two chairs opposite him — Mrs. Moppet's two broad hands resting on her knees, while tears of pleasure coursed down her simple cheeks.

Little Thumb had a book open before him ; he read indifferently well as a general thing, but he had a great memory, and soon learned a bit of poetry by heart, which he then could deliver with great expression.

Archie now recognized a favorite, he had often been called upon to explain, which little Thumb, in his simple way, was, in turn, making clear to Mrs. Moppet.

“ You see there was two friends, Mrs. Moppet,” explained the child, “ like me and Archie, “ and they liked each other, and they didn't want to die ; you see, they was afraid of a river, and the river there, Archie says, means to die.”

“ Yes, dear pet ! ” said Mrs. Moppet, wiping her eyes, “ and quite nateral of them, poor creeturs ! ”

“ But they liked to talk about good things

and heaven, after all, Mrs. Moppet, and one night — but now I'll read you the poetry," said Thumb.

"We were talking about the King,
And our Elder Brother,
As we were used often to speak
One to another.

The Lord, standing quietly by
In the shadows dim,
Smiling perhaps, in the dark, to hear,
Our sweet, sweet talk of him."

"Isn't that very nice, Mrs. Moppet?"

"I'm sure, dear," said Mrs. Moppet, quite choked with emotion, "He must smile to hear *your* sweet, sweet talk of him."

"Do you think so!" exclaimed the delighted Thumb, his innocent eyes searching each shadowy corner of the room, as if possibly the dear Lord might be there.

"And did anything happen to the friends, dear?" asked Mrs. Moppet.

Little Thumb scrimped his eyes over the book. "This print is very bad!" said he, his memory beginning to fail him. "But I can

tell you, the. Lord did send for one of thee friends, and told him he must go over the river ! ”

“ Ah ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Moppet.

“ Yes, but don't feel bad ! ” cried the kind little heart, hastily, “ because the dear Jesus came and took hold of his hand himself, and then he wasn't afraid a bit. But I'd better read t to you,” said Thumb, the lines returning to him again.

“ So they two went down
To the river-side,
And stood in the heavy shadows,
By the black, wild tide.

But when the feet of the Lord
Were come to the waters dim,
They rose to stand on either hand,
And left a path for Him ! ”

“ What do you think of that, Mrs. Moppet ? You see, you needn't have been 'fraid. And it didn't take but a minute to get over ; the friend didn't care for it a mite. What does it say now ? ” he continued. “ Something about his face growing,

* * * 'only more rapt and joyful,
As he clasped the Master's hand,
I think or ever he was aware,
They were come to the Holy Land !' "

"Dear lamb ! dear lamb !" said Mrs. Moppet, entirely dissolved, "how good it is in him to come and read to a poor old creetur, who must soon go through the river !"

Little Thumb smiled, and clambered down.

"I must go and find Archie now," he said. "I know poor Archie is lonely. Ah, there he is now !" and he flew into his arms, as if he hadn't seen him in a month.

Archie kissed almost reverently the little mouth, out of which, so often, came words which the Lord must have smiled to hear.

A sudden knock at the outer door, startled them. Mrs. Moppet opened it, disclosing a ragged, dripping creature, with an infant in her arms.

"Who be you ?" said Mrs. Moppet, a little shortly.

"Pity the unfortunate !" returned a rather hoarse voice. "I am wet and hungry."

Mrs. Moppet looked wistfully at her clean, polished floor, but her heart was softened.

“You may come in,” said she, “but set right by the door, and put your feet on this ere mat.”

“Could I see Miss Adeline Fairchild?” asked the poor woman, meekly obeying. “I’ve heard that she was very kind to the poor.”

“Did you hear it in the moon?” asked Mrs. Moppet. “There was never no such reports on earth, as I ever heerd of.”

She brought a slice of cold meat, and some bread, trying, in the meanwhile, to get a glance at her face, almost hidden in the shadow of a wide, flapping sun-bonnet.

“But I’d like to see Miss Adeline,” persisted the woman.

Little Thumb ran to call her.

“What does she want,” asked that young lady, a little sharply, as she came into the kitchen, and caught sight of the rather suspicious looking creature, shivering in the corner.

“Is this Miss Fairchild?” croaked the woman, rising and dropping a low courtesy.

“It be,” said Mrs. Moppet, as Adeline drew back from the advancing figure.

“I beg pardon if I’ve troubled you, Miss,”

faltered the woman, pausing between the words to pat and hush the baby which seemed restless, "but I've come to see if you could do anything to help a poor, starving creature —"

"There is no necessity for your starving," said Adeline, coldly. "Have you been to the poor-master?"

"Too often, I suppose, Miss," sobbed the woman, "for now he seems out of patience, and will do nothing more for me."

"Where is your husband?" asked Adeline, shortly.

"He is a sailor, Miss, gone to sea this many a long month."

"Ah, in the navy!" suggested Mrs. Moppet.

"Yes, in the knavery, that's what some folks call it," assented the woman, who was immediately attacked with a violent fit of coughing.

"What a very bad cold," remarked Mrs. Moppet aside to Archie. "I've noticed she was uncommon hoarse from the first."

But Archie, instead of responding with his usual quick sympathy, only drew farther back into the shadow of the chimney-corner, and

watched the beggar keenly, with a most heartless twinkle in his eye.

“If you had an old dress?” persisted the woman, holding up a tattered skirt, “I was told you had an old gray walking-dress you were just done with.”

“What impudence!” cried Adeline, “I expect to get many a day’s wear out of it yet.”

“There’s your old blue calico, Miss Adeline,” suggested Mrs. Moppet, not as innocently as usual.

“Which will make an excellent lining to a wrapper,” cried Adeline.

“Well, there’s your alpaccy, that you tore on the front breadth —”

Adeline could hardly contain herself. “It would be wickedly extravagant to give that away, I am sure Mrs. Moppet! I intended it for an underskirt to wear on a rainy day.”

The woman sighed heavily, while little Thumb’s heart swelled nearly to bursting. He made a hasty, whispered proposal to Mrs. Moppet, which was promptly nipped in the bud.

“What, all your clothes?” she exclaimed.

“Bless your dear heart, why I should have to go out begging for *you* to-morrow. No, indeed !”

The beggar seemed deeply moved. “Thank you just the same,” she said, “but I couldn’t take your pretty clothes. I couldn’t wear ’em myself, you know, and it would be long before the baby would grow into them, (long indeed !) It’s asleep now, dear,” she added, as little Thumb gazed wistfully at the bundle, a world of pity in his blue eyes. “I wouldn’t like to waken it.”

Adeline began to find the scene very tiresome, and turned to go away.

“Then you can do nothing for me,” cried the woman, in a last despairing appeal.

“No,” said Adeline, brightening as an excellent idea occurred to her, — “I make it a rule never to encourage strollers and vagrants. If I — or any of my friends — knew you, and knew you to be worthy, the case would be very different ; you would find very few more disposed to be liberal than myself.”

The woman gave a hasty exclamation, and thrust her hand into her pocket.

“ I am so glad you spoke, Miss ! How could I have forgotten it ! I have a note for you from Mrs. Bunscombe, if you will please read it.”

Adeline took it most unwillingly, reading it with a gathering frown. Mrs. Bunscombe spoke of the bearer, Mrs. Pine, as “ a most deserving person, in the greatest need. She was trying to get to the next town, where she had a sister who had offered her a shelter for the summer, — but one of her five children had been taken ill on the way, — she had spent all her money, and pawned her clothes, they were now in the most pitiable destitution. Mrs. Bunscombe further stated that she had done what she could for her, and now sent her to Miss Adeline, who, she knew, would feel it a pleasure and duty still further to assist her. Nothing would come amiss, — a few pennies to speed her on her way, or an old garment to cover one of her naked children.” This was duly signed, “ Sarah Bunscombe.”

Adeline was greatly embarrassed ; but her Shadow, — who was a kind of Siamese twin, called Selfishness and Covetousness, — presently suggested a course of action.

“ Mrs. Bunscombe is an excellent woman,”

she said, "but she is also exceedingly credulous. I have known her to be shamefully imposed upon, and I should not feel it right to do anything for you till I have examined into the case, which I will try to do some time this week, — that is, if the weather is not too bad."

"And you haven't anything for us to-night, not even a penny?" sobbed the woman, seemingly unmindful of a quite decent dress and petticoat which good Mrs. Moppet was hastily rolling in a bundle.

"Not a penny, nor a half-penny!" cried Adeline, turning away, with a gesture of utter impatience.

A sudden, uproarious whoop made poor Thumb's heart nearly jump out of his mouth, and brought Adeline to a stand. The beggar seemed losing her senses; there was a sound of desperate ripping and tearing, accompanied with frantic gestures, till at last, — before their astonished eyes, — forth from the ragged chrysalis, emerged that gay butterfly — Mr. Bob Leighton!

The sickly baby, meanwhile, rolled upon the floor, without manifesting the least discom-

posure, a physiological fact which was explained when little Thumb tenderly raising it, discovered that his sympathies had been wasted upon a rolling-pin wrapped in the ironing blanket.

As for Bob, his first characteristic act upon recovering his identity, was, of course, to stand upon his head before the discomfited Adeline, and force his boots to make her a low bow.

“ Ah, my dear Adeline ! ” said he, coming right side up again, “ here is a little tract upon the ‘ *Luxury of Benevolence*, ’ which you were so kind as to lend me. Please let me return it. Your lovely example is worth volumes of print ! I never shall forget it.”

Mrs. Moppet was leaning against the wall, holding her sides, while the tears ran down her cheeks. A smothered laugh, from the chimney-corner, also discloses to the enraged Adeline that Archie had been witness of it all ! How differently she would have acted had she known !

“ Now, Adeline, do you really think we ought to be willing to sell all we have, and give to the poor ? Tough, isn’t it ? ”

Adeline burst into tears of mortification.

“ O, you shameless rascal ! ” gasped Mrs. Moppet. “ I suspicioned you all the time.”

“Did you, really!” cried Bob, with a little twinkle of a wink at the bundle, which the good lady was quietly shoving under the kitchen table.

“Yes, indeed, Bob Leighton,” she cried, indignantly clearing her skirts of all suspicion of such simplicity, “I am not so ignorant as you are aware of!”

“You never are, my dear Mrs. Moppet!” choked Bob, going off in convulsions.

“This has all been a contrived plan among you,” burst in Adeline. “I see it all; it is shameful! I didn’t think *Archie* could have lent himself to such a trick!”

“He didn’t,” cried Bob, promptly. “I was all my own idea.”

“Didn’t you know,” asked the aggrieved Adeline, “didn’t you suspect who that pretended beggar really was?”

“Yes,” said truthful Archie, “I did; after the first five minutes.”

“And you could not have the kindness to give me a hint! you enjoyed it too much to see me made ridiculous,—that hurts my feelings more than all! But I know the reason,—you

have never forgiven me for your disappointment with the Bunscombes ! ”

“ O, Adeline ! ” cried Archie, coloring, “ I hope you do not think I would take such a small revenge ! ”

“ And when it was so unintentional ! ” added Adeline, with reproachful, watery eyes, “ when I have always meant to take your part ! ”

“ How am I ever to get along with her ? ” sighed Archie, as she rushed away. “ If the pitcher were only as anxious to avoid the stone, as the stone is the pitcher — ”

“ O, you rascal ! ” broke in Mrs. Moppet, wiping her eyes with her apron, that she might hide a stealthy smile, “ and after all that ‘ track ’ on Aniseed and Samphire ! O, you depraved creetur ! how could you now ? ”

“ One good turn deserves another,” returned Bob, “ and on your honor, now, Mrs. Moppet, oughtn’t sauce for the goose to be sauce for the gander.”

Poor Mrs. Moppet was greatly confused trying to disengage the moral point of this question from its culinary bearing, upon which she was much better qualified to judge.

“It was dretful sass, anyway, Bob Leighton,” ventured the poor soul, at last.

Bob gave himself up to the most alarming spasms. “O, Mrs. Moppet, you have made a pun! You are so fearfully clever!”

That long-suffering lady seized a broomstick.

“Archie,” appealed Bob, defending himself nimbly, “don’t you see I’ve acted from the best of motives? I wanted to save Adeline trouble. Now, I don’t believe she’ll feel the necessity of giving any of us a lecture on this subject ever again. But I didn’t suppose my kindness would be appreciated.”

“‘Virtue is its own reward, Bob,’” laughed Archie.

Bob roared, caught up his false baby, with ridiculous tenderness, turned a parting somersault, and was gone.

“Adeline,” said Philip, a half hour later, while she sat in the library, still tearful and sullen, “I’d give a great deal to see Archie’s poem once more, and compare it with mine, — if I only could without his knowing it.”

“Well, you can,” said Adeline, shortly; “it lies on his bureau, and he is in the kitchen.”

“But wouldn’t *you* get it?” coaxed Philip.
“I wouldn’t like to be found there, but you could be bringing towels or something, if he should happen to come up.”

Adeline was not in an obliging mood, but because of his importunity, she went, and soon laid before Philip the neat envelope, — directed, “Committee on National Poems. Entered for prize.”

Philip drew out the enclosure, and read with growing uneasiness.

“It is much better than I thought,” said he, “he has made some very important alterations. I ought to have had more time, for mine; we are not entering fairly. There, take it back, before he misses it,” cried Philip, irritably. “I shall sit up all night, but even then, I’m afraid he’ll get it. Two triumphs in a week! he will be quite unbearable!”

Fortunately Archie was not yet in his room, when Adeline stole softly back. As she lingered a little, she observed his portfolio lying on the desk, and yielding to her uncontrollable curiosity she hastily opened it. The first thing her eyes fell upon was a little copy of verses

entitled, "Lines to B—— upon her fifteenth birthday." They were very pretty and complimentary. Adeline turned over the rest of the papers with quickened breath; there were no lines to A——, under any circumstances, whatever. Now B, alphabetically considered, is the very next thing to A. But in the light under which the two letters now presented themselves to the aggrieved Adeline, immeasurable seas rolled between. There really was no limit to Archie's blindness and injustice, she thought, as she once more turned every leaf. There were plenty of copies of his conceited national poem, and here was the very one he had read them first, all crossed out, and interlined — a perfect hodge-podge.

"Yes, there is a great difference, as Philip said," she sighed, as she again took out the last fair copy, and compared it.

Hark! was that a step on the stairs? She hastily thrust one copy in the envelope, sealing it in her flutter, threw the other in the portfolio, turned down the gas, and just had time to close the door of her own room, as Archie's head appeared at the last turning.

Adeline sank into a chair, a most vexatious question having occurred to her, — which copy had she thrust in the envelope, in her hurry? She could not have told to save her life. Suppose it was the wrong one! Oughtn't she to go that minute and tell Archie about it? No, a thousand times, no! She had had enough humiliation; she never could bring herself to confess to Archie that she had been so dishonorable as to look in his portfolio! No, if it was wrong, wrong it must be! Besides, after all, the boys would only be matched more fairly, as Philip suggested; and finally, — and this thought was decisive, — in case Archie should lose, he would have an absorbing vexation of his own, he would not be apt to have quite such a good memory for *her* mortification. She would think no more about it.

There was an interval of silence in Archie's room, succeeded by the sweet, solemn tones of the organ. He had been helping little Thumb to bed; and the child always loved to march into dreamland to the sound of music. It was very tender and dreamy to-night, and Adeline began to cry afresh; not that she was touched

with any right feeling for Archie, but rather from a profound self pity. She was very anxious to do right, she was sure, but she was very unfortunate; everything in the world, animate and inanimate, seemed leagued in a conspiracy against her.

Having played little Thumb to sleep, Archie was preparing to follow; but he felt that he must first take one more glance at the beloved poem.

“What! sealed?” he cried, taking it up in some surprise, “I must have been absent-minded, — I meant to have read it again. But pshaw! I know it all by heart, — it is of no consequence.”

And the next morning, as he went to the store, he dropped it, with a hopeful smile, at the appointed place of deposit.

Ned Bunscombe, who was hovering around, nodded encouragingly to him.

“Father is on the committee,” said he, “and I told him to read very carefully anything in your handwriting. I told him he’d know it by it’s always being just as clear as print. Some way I feel as if you’d get it. I

haven't heard of any of our real, out-and-out poets going in for it yet."

"Thank you," laughed Archie. "I think that compliment won't turn my head;" and he went on his way most light-heartedly. All day long he whistled unconsciously at his work.

"If I get this prize," he said to himself, "father will see that I have some talents, and it will remind him that I ought to be sent to college. And then, with the money, I shall buy Bettine some blue beads like Adeline's—they will look so very pretty with her eyes and hair. I wish Bettine would tell me all her troubles as she used, when we were little children. She looks too pale; sometimes I am afraid that they are very poor, as Adeline says. Well, I shall find out in a little while, for we are growing better friends again. She sees that I have conquered my Shadow, which has always made all the trouble between us; it hasn't stirred in weeks and weeks; I am almost sure it is *dead*!" he finished triumphantly.

Alas, poor Archie! His shadow was very cunning; it was full of stratagems and wiles. It was only waiting now for Archie to be off

his guard, when it would creep upon him un-
awares. One can never be safe from such a
powerful Shadow, unless he has asked the help
and watchfulness of the Eye that never sleeps.

CHAPTER X.

CREEPING UP.



T was the morning of the Fourth. Archie could not sleep after the first roar of cannon and ringing of bells, and neither could Hop o' my Thumb.

“We are going to be very happy to-day, Archie, aren't we?” said he, excitedly, as Archie tied his little ribbon. “I told Peter Crane, *my* brother was going to have the prize ! And you'd be sure to get something for each of us.”

“Ah, you oughtn't to have said that,” said Archie, but he smiled, nevertheless ; and as they went down to the garden, he asked — “And what would the Thumb like ?”

“The train of cars, Archie, that you wind up, and they whistle, and go off by themselves just like real !” responded the Thumb,

promptly; who had seen a very expensive French toy of this kind, in a shop window.

“Why, that would take a fortune!” cried Archie, lifting both hands.

“Ah, I should love it so!” said little Thumb, yearningly.

“Well, we’ll see;” and Archie went over to the fence, where he had caught a glimpse of Bettine’s blue dress, as she picked raspberries for breakfast.

“I suppose this will be a very exciting day,” said she, looking up brightly.

Archie nodded, his heart giving a quick leap. He was very glad that Philip had tried too; a triumph now would be doubly delightful. What happiness if he could show Bettine that he was really superior to the boy who had criticised him so unmercifully!

“Bettine,” said he, abruptly, “do you think it is wrong for a person to want to triumph over his enemies? For instance, if any great honor comes to you, is it wrong to wish to have your enemies see it, and to enjoy it a thousand times more if they are just gnashing their teeth over it?”

“ I am sure grandfather would say so ; ” said Bettine, hesitating, “ he always thinks such feelings are very unworthy.”

“ What do you think of the twenty-third psalm ? ” was Archie's next question.

“ Why don't you ask me what I think of the Emperor of France ? ” laughed Bettine. “ How you do jump about ! Think of it ? why, it is beautiful, — almost perfection I have always thought.”

“ Yes, divine ! ” assented Archie, heartily. “ David speaks of the goodness of the Lord, — he enumerates his blessings, — he is made to lie down in green pastures, and led beside still waters. But what does he mean in the fifth verse, Bettine ? ‘ Thou preparest a table before me *in the presence of mine enemies !* ’ ”

Bettine began to see the connection, but she looked a little bewildered.

“ I'll tell you, Tiny,” laughed Archie, as she shook her head. “ It is just a capital little touch of human nature in David, and I like him better for it ; he is speaking of his blessings, you know, and now the Lord has prepared a table for him, and not only that, but in the

presence of his enemies; an added deliciousness! don't you see? I know just how he felt."

"Don't you think," hesitated Bettine, "that he was only glad because his enemies could see how great and good the Lord was?"

Archie shook his head. "I don't believe you can understand David as well as I can. Men feel so much more strongly about such things than women do. 'In the presence of mine enemies,'" repeated Archie, with a little laugh. "I should like all my tables set in that way. It may be mean, Tiny, but I'm certainly in good company!"

"I shall ask grandfather about it," said Bettine, also laughing. "I'm sure you're wrong."

"I have had a great many disappointments this last year, you know, Bettine," pursued Archie, "and I think I have traced the *source* of most of them. It has made me very angry sometimes, but now I think my triumphs are going to begin. I think I can prove myself a match for my enemies," said he, his eye kindling. "'They shall come out against me one way, and flee before me seven ways!'"

With what vehemence he said it! Bettine

shivered a little, and the color came and went in her face.

“Have I frightened you?” cried Archie, with a quick remorse. “I forgot to whom I was talking. Did I look so very fierce?” There was such a marvellous softening of tone and manner. “You were not really afraid of me, Tiny?” he whispered, pleadingly, with his charming smile.

What a magnetism there was in this strong, fiery, tender nature! Afraid of him? Bettine moved a step forward, with an impulse to throw herself into the arms involuntarily stretched towards her, and answer the question in the old child fashion. But she recollected herself, laughed, and ran away.

“I wonder what she saw,” said Archie, thoughtfully, turning towards the house. “It could not have been the Shadow, — he is dead!”

A few hours later, they were all walking to the tent where the exercises were to be held. Gay banners floated on every side, strains of martial music filled the air, all was confusion and delight.

Ned Bunscombe touched Archie's shoulder as they were passing in.

“ I think you’re all right,” said he, “ at least, there’s a rumor that the prize is going to the gray stone house.”

Another bound of his heart, — a happiness that nearly stifled him, — and Archie walked lightly in. He whistled an accompaniment to the lively airs played by the band, as they selected their seats, laughing between times, at the veriest trifle.

“ Let those laugh that win,” said Philip, out of patience with his excess of confidence.

“ Agreed !” said Archie, good-naturedly.

The exercises were long and tedious. There was the usual reading of the “ Declaration,” followed by the stereotyped speeches, through which that unhappy pair, — the “ father of his country,” and the American eagle, — were mercilessly dragged, according to custom. But the end came at last, and, — amidst a breathless silence, — Dr. Bunscombe, chairman of the committee on prize poems, arose to make his report. After premising that none of the poems had been of a very high order, and, it had been thought that none were deserving of

the first prize, he announced that the second prize had been awarded to —

Archie held his breath, and tried to look unconscious, while he murmured — “ In the presence of mine enemies ! ”

“ To Mr. Philip Fairchild ! ” finished Dr. Bunscombe.

Archie sat completely stunned ; he did not feel little Thumb's small hand, nor see Bettine's quick look of sympathy, given before she thought of congratulating Philip. Neither did he notice Adeline's uneasiness, as she looked at his white, blank face.

“ That handsome boy there is going to faint ! ” said an old lady just in front, passing over her salts.

“ Try not to look so, Archie,” whispered Bettine. “ Everybody will know you have been disappointed.”

Archie made an effort to arouse himself, and in part succeeded. Bettine with great delicacy, appeared not to notice anything farther.

“ I am sure Philip,” she laughed, “ you have no very great reason for crowing ; you have the smallest kind of a compliment. You don't get

the prize because yours was the best, but because, apparently, it was the least bad."

"I am satisfied," said Philip, such a triumphant ring in his voice, although truly he did not mean Archie to hear. "It is better than Archie's, — that is enough!"

As for Archie, everything was swinging before his eyes; the tent seemed sweeping down upon him; the drummer, in the closing piece, beat upon his head instead of the big bass drum.

"I am so sorry," said Ned Bunscombe, pressing his hand, as he came into the open air. "I couldn't feel worse if it were myself; I didn't think you would take it quite so much to heart, though."

"You can't judge by my face," said Archie, trying to rally. "I have one of my terrible headaches. I don't feel anything but the pain."

They walked in silence a block or more.

"Would you like your manuscript back?", asked Ned, gently. "I think I could get it for you."

"O, yes! thank you," said Archie, with a burning blush, feeling as if he wanted to hide

it away forever. It was such a mortification that Philip's smooth, common-place rhymes had been deemed better than his, written with his pen dipped in his heart !

Archie hastened to his room, shutting out all the world, even little Thumb, lingering tearful in the door.

“ Here, little one,” said he, forcing a smile, as he emptied his pockets of some loose change, “ go buy crackers and wheels and Roman candles, everything, and have a splendid time ! ”

Very relentlessly he shut out the wistful face, and then, staggering to the bed, threw himself down to toss an hour or two, with a pain that left no room for thought. The suffering was at last followed by the usual deep sleep of exhaustion, from which Archie awoke, late in the afternoon, only again to find the indomitable Thumb curled close to his side, with one round tear on his flushed cheek. An open window, and the delicate lattice of a Michigan rose, betrayed the hazardous road travelled by the faithful little feet.

“ Thank God for little Thumb ! ” cried Archie, involuntarily, as the thought came to

him, that this child-love was a greater gift than Philip had ever known.

There was a knock at the door, and a servant handed in a letter.

“Ned has kept his word,” sighed Archie, as he was about to tear it in a hundred pieces. “But I believe I will read it just once more,” added he, with a lingering affection; and he drew forth the paper.

Words could not describe his astonishment as the blurred, incoherent mass met his eye. One of his first, roughest drafts! Could it be possible that he had made such a mistake! No, it could not! he remembered so distinctly copying it out in his fairest hand, and putting it in the envelope. Could any one have meddled with it? He had thought it strange to find it sealed.

“*Philip* did it!” cried he, with sudden conviction, jumping at the conclusion with a cry of rage. Without a minute’s further thought, he went to find him.

They were all sitting in the garden — Adeline, Bettine, Philip and Bob, laughing and talking in the best of spirits, which was an added insult, while he had been so unhappy.

“What is the matter?” asked Bob, looking up, carelessly, as Archie rushed toward them. “You look like a ball of red worsted.”

Archie could hardly speak at first, but in a minute, holding out the blotted scrawl, he detailed his wrongs in incoherent words, and accused Philip of the dishonorable deed.

Philip denied it with the greatest indignation. “A Fairchild could never stoop to such an action!” said he.

“Don’t perjure yourself, Philip,” said Archie, in a tone much lower and slower, — but which thrilled them all, it conveyed such a force of suppressed passion; “though I don’t know but that you are right — I don’t know that a Fairchild *would* have to *stoop* much to do such a thing!”

Adeline turned very white.

“O, Archie!” cried Bettine, imploringly, “do you know what you are doing? do you see how you are insulting Philip?”

“But Bettine, what would *you* think of such an act?” cried he, turning suddenly upon her.

“Shameful! if it was really done. But isn’t it possible you could have made the mistake yourself?” she suggested, timidly.

“Not a shadow of possibility!” cried Archie, passionately. “Philip did it for fear I should triumph over him! *Philip* did it, don’t you believe me, Bettine?”

Bettine looked at Philip, who sat in calm, quiet dignity; he certainly appeared to very great advantage by the side of Archie, whose face was distorted with rage.

“Do not be disturbed about me, Bettine. He is quite beside himself. I do not mind him in the least,” said Philip, with a calm, pitying smile.

The Shadow crept up farther, — there was no one on guard.

“Don’t you believe me, Bettine?” cried Archie, scorning to address himself to Philip. “Did I ever tell a lie?”

“Let us talk about it some other time,” said Bettine, soothingly. “You are very angry now, and you will be very sorry afterwards for being so unjust. There is some mistake, Archie, I think you ought to apologize to Philip.”

“Apologize to Philip!” exclaimed Archie, looking at her as he had never looked before.

“Bettine Leighton,” cried he, his voice trem-

bling, "this has gone on long enough; you must not be so double-faced — you must choose between us two to-day! Nobody can be Philip's friend and mine too! Which will you believe, Bettine, him or me?"

"Both," cried Bettine, tearfully, stretching out her hands. "There's a mistake — Archie! Archie!"

But he would not turn, — striding grandly away. Bettine covered her face with her hands with a strange chill at her heart. The Shadow had fallen darkly between them, as never before.

"Isn't it frightful?" murmured Adeline, who had been experiencing a strange mixture of relief and mortification at finding herself of so little consequence in the foregoing scene.

"Yes, it is a great pity!" said Philip, with unconscious complacency, "he had originally a noble nature, but this anger is a very large fly in the pot of ointment. Poor Archie!"

"Philip certainly shows a most excellent spirit," thought Bettine.

But Bob, who had been unusually sober and silent, came up valiantly to the defence of his hero.

“ You needn’t be pitying Archie,” cried he, “ he’ll come out way ahead of you all yet. Everything has gone against him lately, I never saw such luck ; it’s enough to make him furious ! But *he’ll* be all right ! I heard Dr. Bunscombe say, he wasn’t made out of any common clay ! ”

“ No,” laughed Philip, “ out of lava from the crater of Vesuvius, I should think. But, come, Bettine, don’t let him spoil the day. We must expect these eruptions now and then, you see ; he will be only smoking, to-morrow, and quite harmless.”

Bob walked away, choking with indignation.

“ Archie,” said Hop o’ my Thumb, awaking a half hour afterwards, “ I had such a queer dream ! I dreamed the organ was angry, — it scolded so, and screamed ” —

Archie stopped in the midst of his tumultuous playing ; he always heard little Thumb.

“ It is very wrong to be angry, isn’t it, Archie ? ” continued the child. “ Teddy Hall stole all my marbles, yesterday, and I asked Mrs. Moppet if I couldn’t make a face at him, when he went past the window, but she guessed I’d better try to smile. So I did, Archie, and

what do you think ! he brought 'em every one back this morning ! And Mrs. Moppet said there was a crumb for people that got over ugly feelings, and it was something about our Father giving them a star ; but I never thought he'd give back the marbles too ! Aren't you glad I got over being angry, Archie ? do you think I did just right ? ”

Why would the pure little heart always bring these questions to him, never resting quite satisfied till Archie, wicked, passion-tossed Archie, gave him his full approval ? Archie caught him up, and held him tight, with a strange feeling, nevertheless, that though little Thumb's fresh cheeks were pressed close to his, the bright little soul was drifting far away from him. How far they had separated that very day ! The thought gave him exquisite pain ; and the Shadow, the hateful Shadow, crept away again hiding from little Thumb, — the child that walked in the light of God.

CHAPTER XI.

BREAST-HIGH.



S Philip descended to breakfast the next morning, he met Archie upon the landing.

“I have been waiting for you, Philip,” he said, looking very pale and determined, “to ask your pardon. That affair about the poem has been a great mortification to me, and it will probably always be a mystery; but the worst thing about it all, is my conduct yesterday, in the garden — that was quite excusable” — Archie faltered.

“Yes,” said Philip, with his cool superiority, “I should think that was the right name for it. It is a great pity, my dear fellow, that you cannot better control yourself; you are losing the respect of all your friends.” Philip moved slowly on.

Archie’s face was blazing now, — all his good

impulses gone. "I shall make no further apologies," he said, "it is too great a humiliation."

At the breakfast table, they were all very busy discussing an expected visit of Uncle Howard Fairchild, an only brother of the father of Philip and Adeline. Archie had often heard them speak of him; he was rich, and a bachelor, and Philip and Adeline expected to be his heirs. For several years he had been travelling on the continent, and from time to time, Philip and Adeline had written to him, taking the greatest pains with the composition of the epistles. It was very evident that they were exceedingly anxious to please him. And this was, by no means, an easy matter, as Adeline, in a moment of confidence had once informed Archie.

"He has very strict ideas about young people," she said, "and thinks they should be taught to have an object in life. He was always a most active business man himself, till his health failed him, and made rest necessary."

Archie had always thought he should like him, but he noticed that the news of his coming did not seem to give unalloyed satisfaction to the Fairchilds. Philip was especially uneasy.

It had been a comparatively simple matter to get up the most praiseworthy sentiments on paper, but he had an uncomfortable suspicion that his indolent, careless life would ill bear the scrutiny of Uncle Howard's sharp eyes. The visit, however, was not to be till fall; he would have plenty of time to think over the matter, and make up his mind to something, before that.

In the meantime, Mr. Falconer, who had long been ailing, seemed to be more rapidly losing ground. Later, and still later he went to his office and foundry, and shorter, each day, became his stay. Nearly the whole weight of the complicated business was falling upon Archie's young shoulders.

"This is too much for you, my son," Mr. Falconer would say, anxiously, "and yet if you could only struggle on a few months, I think I shall be stronger again. It is so important, Archie, — if the business should stop now, I'm afraid I couldn't pay twenty cents on the dollar!"

The lip of the proud business man trembled, in spite of his effort at self-control.

“It shall *not* stop! father,” responded Archie. No one shall ever have it to say that he is the poorer for any dealings with the Falconers! I shall work day and night! My father’s name shall never have a stain of that kind upon it!”

Mr. Falconer smiled upon his son. There was so much that was honorable and lovely in his character.

“I am proud of you, Archie!” he said; and Archie’s heart beat high. He had, from that moment, a new object in life. Putting his college dreams behind him, he gave himself, heart and soul, to the pursuit of wealth.

“I shall make my father very happy,” he said to himself. “Riches are not to be despised, by any means; they can bring a great deal that is satisfactory to one’s life. For instance, in case Grandfather Leighton should lose that suit, which *must* be decided this fall, at the latest, how delightful it would be to help him in some mysterious way! And Bettine—sweet, pale little Bettine! if some time she could only forgive and forget the Shadow—” Archie sighed heavily, and walked on faster than ever. He

scarcely dared put the hope in words, but he clung to it, nevertheless.

How ubiquitous he seemed at the "works;" here, there, everywhere in a minute! Each one of the numerous workmen felt that an eye was upon him, but they all grew to like and respect their young master, in spite of his quickness, and intolerance of a fault. He had always a word of generous praise, when it was deserved; and then, with a practical clear-sightedness, he had once or twice suggested some improvement in the machinery, which had been such a saving of time and labor, it had won him the most unqualified admiration.

"A wonderful boy, sir!" the old foreman would say, now and then, to Mr. Falconer. "Smart as a steel-trap, sir!"

"Philip," said Bettine, one day, anxious that her old friend should be taken back into favor, "don't you really think there is something very unusual about Archie? Grandfather says he hardly ever goes in the street without hearing something in his praise; the oldest business men seem to think he is a wonder, he manages that great business so skilfully. And, Philip,

another thing, Grandfather was saying that the ocean was a grand body of water, but, just on that very account, there were very few days in the year when it was calm enough to reflect *heaven*, while a little inland lake would be blue and peaceful for weeks. And I was thinking whether it wasn't very much the same way with great *natures*? Perhaps we have not been quite so patient as we ought with Archie."

Unconscious Bettine had not left Philip to draw a very flattering comparison. He colored deeply; the whole speech was very distasteful.

"Archie is certainly in a very conspicuous situation for one so young," said Philip, prompted by *his* Shadow, whose name, perhaps it is unnecessary to state, was Jealousy, Envy; "but I should think, Bettine, you could see that it is only the *place* that gives him this importance, and nothing at all unusual in himself. Of course you will hear a great deal of him,— 'a small coin in a big jar makes a great noise.'"

"I suppose there *is* something in that," said Bettine, greatly struck by this plausible explanation.

“But I must do something about this,” thought Philip. “It will not do to have Uncle Howard making any such comparisons.”

“Archie,” piped little Thumb, one warm evening in August, as his brother, bringing his business home with him, paced up and down the garden, his head full of figures, “here is Grandfather Leighton at the fence, and he says you haven’t been to see him since the Fourth.”

“I have been so very busy, sir,” said Archie, coming up, in some embarrassment. Bettine was standing there too, but with a little bow, she moved away, her eyes on the ground. She had not looked full in Archie’s face, since the day when the Shadow fell between them; she was afraid of meeting another of those cold, stern looks. If she could only have seen the regret and pain in his eyes instead!

“You are very thin,” said the old man, passing his hand affectionately over the boy’s face. “You mustn’t work too hard.”

“It isn’t that,” said Archie, wearily.

“What then? Life ought to be very bright to one of your age. What troubles you, Archie? I hope the Shadow—”

“I was afraid that you would speak of the Shadow,” cried Archie, hastily, looking up, nevertheless, with a faint smile. “I confess that I have been indulging it a little, lately. I can’t kill it; it is tougher than I thought, but I’m master of it still — I have it entirely under my control!”

This is the hallucination of all that have Shadows.

Grandfather Leighton was greatly troubled; insomuch that he took no notice of little Thumb, pulling vainly at his coat.

“I’ve asked him more than forty times, Crib,” said the child, sorrowfully, to his companion, who wagged a sympathetic tail.

“Ah, were you speaking to me, dear?” asked the old man, rousing.

“Yes,” said the Thumb, hastily; “don’t that lilac-bush look like a camel?”

“Where, child? I must put on my specs. Well, dear, they don’t seem to do any good, -- it’s all in a mist. I can’t see it.”

“You must be sleepy,” said Thumb, briefly.

“Why?” smiled the old man, amused at his tone of conviction.

“Because I’m just so when I’m sleepy; I don’t see or hear very well. Don’t you think you are sleepy?”

A strange idea struck the old man. Life’s day had been long, — his eyes and ears were tired and dull; why was not this the sleepiness that came before the last, long rest? It was a rather sweet thought, after all; everything was being hushed, and growing dim in life’s twilight.

“Yes, little Wilfred,” said he, solemnly, “you are right; I am sleepy.”

“And why don’t you go to bed, then?”

“I can’t go till our Father says it is bed-time,” said Grandfather Leighton, gently, with the child-smile on his old face.

“So our Father takes care of you, too,” nodded the Thumb. “And won’t you want to sit up a minute longer, when He tells you?”

“Not a minute!” replied the old man, with an infinite content.

Archie was deeply touched with this peace and confidence. How could any one speak so calmly of such a terrible change! it was all so dark to *him*! A yearning came over him for a

better and purer life ; a desire to cease this struggle all by himself, and lean upon a more powerful arm, — to bring all his weakness and darkness to the “ strong and bright God.” Perhaps Grandfather Leighton could tell him how to come, — he would open his heart to him.

“ Good evening,” cried a careless voice, close at their side. “ Is Miss Bettine at home this evening ? ”

It was Philip ; and Archie's better feelings fled ; he was so glad he had not begun to speak.

“ Ah, Archie,” continued Philip, “ I have been looking everywhere for you. Mother wishes to speak with you on a matter of business. She has been waiting an hour or more, and it has been quite annoying, as she had an engagement.”

Archie was only too glad to go ; the garden didn't seem large enough for him and Philip, and — the Shadow.

Greatly wondering what his stepmother could want, he went immediately to the library. She put her finger on her lip, as he appeared,

and pointing to his father, who was dozing uneasily in his chair, she led him out on the piazza.

“How is the business getting on, Archie?” she began. “I’ve been wanting to know this long time, but I did not like to trouble your father, — he seems so weak and nervous.”

“The prospects are better than they have been in some time,” returned Archie, “but the returns are not very large as yet. I think a year of good management and economy will set us all right, though, and after that we shall breathe freer.”

“I am so glad you are doing better,” said Mrs. Falconer, paying no attention to the latter part of the speech; “because I can better ask” — she hesitated.

“Better ask what?” thought Archie, apprehensively. He had just, with great effort, paid in her half-yearly interest; she could not be in need of more money.

“The fact is,” Mrs. Falconer began again, “Philip is very anxious to go into business, and I, myself, think it would be an excellent thing for him. We have had a long talk to-night,

and he says he has a capital chance to buy out Mr. Binder's bookstore. Mr. Binder, you are aware, has the California fever, and is ready to settle up everything here at a great sacrifice. Now, if Philip could command the funds, this would be a splendid chance for him. He is rather young, but very mature, I think, and would probably do very well. It is certainly very much to his credit to wish it; don't you think so?" she asked, fondly.

"Yes, stammered Archie, waiting for her next words with a sinking heart.

"Of course you have already guessed what I wish to say,—"she smiled. "If it can possibly be done, I should like to withdraw our money from your father's business. I should like very much to indulge Philip in this."

"It can be done," said Archie, in a constrained voice, "and *must* be, if you insist upon it; but it will ruin my father, just at this time!"

"O, no!" said Mrs. Falconer, in a shocked tone; "then we mustn't think of it! I must tell Philip he must wait. But are you quite sure? you are so young, it isn't possible that

you should fully understand these matters. I had better ask your father, after all."

"O, no!" said Archie, anxiously; "it will agitate him so! I assure you I understand the business perfectly. Mr. Banks, the head book-keeper, has been over everything with me; I know just how every penny is employed, and exactly what to expect from it."

"But Philip will be cruelly disappointed," murmured Mrs. Falconer. "It will be so hard to convince him that he has not the best right to the money, — you know boys will be so unreasonable!"

Archie wiped the drops from his forehead. "How soon would he want it?" he asked.

"Immediately," said Mrs. Falconer; "he would like to be engaged in business before Uncle Howard arrives."

Ah, that explained the sudden fit of industry! Everything must be done to make a fair show before Uncle Howard, — it was so important to please him — to secure an interest in this gold mine!

"I will talk with Banks," faltered Archie; "if there is any possible way, it shall be done."

“Thank you,” said Mrs. Falconer, with gracious flattery. “I know your energetic character, Archie. I shall consider the matter settled.”

“Archie,” called Philip, as he was passing out of the gate the next morning.

Archie, pale and troubled, paused, and leaned against the post.

“Am I to have my money? yes, or no?” asked Philip, quickly. “Mother said you could hardly tell last night. It’s a good joke, though, to be asking as a favor for what is really my own!”

“But Philip, business men know when they invest money, that they cannot always expect to withdraw it at a minute’s notice.”

“No, and I shouldn’t ask it, if I didn’t believe it a perfectly simple matter for you to oblige me. Everybody says your business has been excellent for the last few months.”

“But we have had such heavy debts to meet, we could but just keep afloat. O, Philip!” cried Archie, condescending to entreaty, for he had lain awake nearly all night, and saw nothing but ruin before them, “if you would only

wait a year, or even six months ! It will just kill father to have this come upon him now ! Couldn't you possibly, Philip ? ”

Philip broke off an aster, and leisurely pulled the leaves.

Archie bit his lip, and taking a little memorandum-book out of his pocket, pretended to be deeply engrossed in some figures, while his whole excitable frame trembled in the pause.

“ That is certainly a very cool request, to say the least,” said Philip, at last. “ You are asking a great deal of human nature. I am to give up this chance of a splendid investment, and sit idle all the year, while for reward of the sacrifice, I may have the pleasure of seeing Archie Falconer make a fortune out of *my* money ! ”

The Shadow leaped up in full, resistless strength. It touched Archie's heart, and the blood boiled, while his fist clenched involuntarily.

Philip changed color, and drew back a little.

“ I must remember Rosette,” said he, quietly.

All that was good and noble vanished from Archie's face, like the last sickly sunshine before a thunder-cloud.

“ Archie Falconer will never touch one cent, for which, in any possible way he could be indebted to *you* ! he would rather die ! ” said Archie, in that low, compressed tone, which always made Philip more uneasy than the most vehement outburst. “ And you shall have your money, Philip, if I have to sell body and ” —

The last word was lost in the slamming of the gate, as he rushed down the street, nearly falling over Bettine Leighton, whom he noticed no more than if she had been one of the palings of the fence. Archie's conduct had touched her very deeply, of late.

“ Mr. Archie,” said the foreman, meeting him at the entrance to the office, and rubbing his hands, “ a Mr. Barton, from the West, has been here this morning ; he has heard, in some way, of that last invention of yours, and was very anxious to see it. I told him that couldn't be done without your permission, — you'd put a piece of your brain in there, that we couldn't show up for nothing. And then, what do you think, Mr. Archie ! ” said Martyn, triumphantly, “ he just hinted that if this thing was

what he thought, and you would be willing to sell it out and out, — he'd give you something very handsome for it! I shouldn't a bit wonder if he'd go as high as a thousand, — or maybe more! But I said, "No, Mr. Barton, this is a very good thing, we expect it will make our own fortunes; a thousand, or twice that, is nothing to us!"

"And you sent him away?" said Archie, hastily. "I am *very* sorry! Don't you think you could find him? If he will give me that for it, he must have it."

"Excuse me, Mr. Archie," said Martyn, looking very blank, "but you're very young, sir, and I don't think you know the value of what you're throwing away. It's a big idea, Mr. Archie, and I've had experience enough to know that there's money in it. Just have a little patience, and it will bring you a great many thousands instead of one. I could hardly sleep last night for thinking of it. I thought it would bring the old firm of the Falconers right up among the very first again!"

Archie hesitated; he had dreamed a great many such dreams himself, over those few little

inches of wood and steel ; how could he give it all up ?

“ Making your fortune out of Philip's money ? ” whispered the Shadow.

Archie frowned. “ I must sell it, Martyn ! ” he said, with that compression of his mouth, which Martyn knew admitted of no appeal.

“ Mr. Barton said he would be back in an hour, sir,” groaned the old man, fairly shedding tears. He had been a faithful servant in the house of the Falconers since the time of Archie's grandfather, and their honor was dearer to him than his own.

Mr. Barton kept his word, and in the course of the morning, had an interview with determined Archie. The gray-haired manufacturer was, at first, greatly disappointed at sight of the boyish inventor, but, as Archie in a few luminous words, explained the model, and showed its perfect adaptability to the end desired, he was quite lost in admiration.

“ I think I can recognize genius when I see it,” said he, shaking him heartily by the hand, while he made him a liberal offer.

“ I should like to retain some interest in the invention,” urged Archie.

“No,” said Mr. Barton, his sharp, business instincts awaking, “I pay you a fair price, and take it entirely with all possibilities of failure or success, or else I leave it; you must take your choice.”

Archie sighed; the honor of the discovery, the fortune he ought to have made, the pleasant surprise he had long been hoping to give his father, — all, all must be put aside with so many other hopes and dreams.

“It is yours, sir!” said Archie. And that very day he was the possessor, in ready money, of three thousand dollars!

“It must have been a great invention you see,” said the broken-hearted Martyn, “or a sharp man like that would never have given such a sum. Not that it’s half what it’s worth; he’ll make a hundred thousand out of it, see if he don’t!”

Archie went home that night, moody and wretched. It was raining, but the constant little Thumb looked out smiling and serene from a huge umbrella, at the accustomed corner. Archie mechanically took his hand.

“We thought you’d never come to-night,

didn't we, Crib? But we've had plenty of time to look at the cars, — and the man wound them up for us, and off they went with that cunning whistle, just like mad! How it did make us laugh, didn't it, Crib? Archie, do you think you can *ever* buy 'em for me?"

"What?" said Archie, absently.

"The cars, you know, that wind up, and you said maybe you'd buy 'em some time. Will you, Archie? say, when do you think you will?"

Archie was sick at heart, and little Thumb's persistence seemed quite unbearable just at this time.

"No, Wilfred, no! do you hear me? I said, no!" he cried. "I am very poor, poor as a beggar! and if you tease me any more I shall go crazy. No! no! *no!*"

The Shadow had been breast-high all day, sitting in Archie's *heart*, or how could he ever have spoken so to the little child, looking at him in such blank surprise.

Thumb's baby lip trembled, his blue eyes grew misty, he could hardly steady the huge umbrella it had given him such pride to

carry. But Archie, so unlike himself, had no eyes for the stumbling feet. He was going a little out of his way to stop at Mr. Binder's ; his *head* was clear and untouched as yet, and it had a great deal of work to do.

“ How much do you ask for this stock, sir ? ” he asked abruptly of Mr. Binder, after the briefest greeting.

“ Ten thousand dollars, I told your brother. A great sacrifice ! And I said further, as he was so anxious, that I'd be willing to take five thousand down, and the rest in notes ; though I shouldn't like to have them stretch over more than a few months.

Archie just as abruptly turned away, walking hastily home, while tearful Thumb, and deeply dejected Crib pattered after.

A few minutes after, Thumb was sobbing out his troubles on good Mrs. Moppet's bosom, while Archie was closeted with his father, whom happily he found looking a little brighter than usual.

“ Well, my boy,” said his father, somewhat agitated, at the end of a long, confidential talk, “ I am willing to yield to your strong will ; and

indeed, I confess, it would be the greatest relief to me, if this money could reasonably be paid. But talk faithfully with Banks; if he thinks it possible to sell so much stock at a sacrifice, without bringing ruin upon us, I will give my consent."

A day or two after, as Archie went out of the gate, he was surprised to find Martyn standing there, holding a magnificent dark bay horse.

"And whose is this?" cried Archie, in involuntary admiration, passing his hand caressingly over the polished, silken skin.

The horse whinnied, and laid its head, with the delicate, quivering nostrils, upon Archie's shoulder.

"It is yours, sir!" said Martyn, with a queer mixture of grief and triumph. "Mr. Barton has sent it; he thought you looked pale, and needing exercise, and I suppose he'd rather you'd live, and get up another invention for him."

"How generous!" cried Archie, leaping with a child-like delight into the saddle.

"Generous!" said Martyn, grimly, "it is nothing to what he'll make out of you! He

ought to have sent him with a saddle and bridle of gold ! ”

Philip was making a morning offering of flowers at Leighton cottage.

“ How splendid he looks ! ” cried Bettine, entirely oblivious of asters and poppies, as Archie came dashing past.

“ Which ? Archie or the horse ? ” asked Philip, in his cold, shower-bath manner.

Bettine did not answer.

“ You will always be very fond of Archie, no matter what he does, wont you ? ” said Philip. “ It is quite natural, when you have so grown up together. I suppose you feel just like brother and sister ? ”—he looked at her very keenly.

“ Yes, ” stammered Bettine, coloring a little.

“ And you admire him very much ? ”

“ A man is never so attractive as when he rides in that fearless way on a noble, spirited horse, ” said Bettine, evasively.

Philip went away to consult his mother upon a new want ; but, this time, with utter want of success ; she saw no way to indulge him.

Philip pondered nearly all day, in despair, when suddenly a bright idea occurred to him. The next morning, *two* horses, saddled and bridled, were waiting at the gate.

“How much did you give for that old hair trunk, Philip?” asked Bob, half closing a critical eye.

Philip disdained to answer, as he mounted his chestnut nag, whose chief recommendation was a long, flowing tail.

“Let me give you a little advice, Philip,” said impudent Bob, in a shrill whisper; “don’t follow Archie too close, or they’ll take you for a servant!”

Philip colored; the words cut deeper, as he, himself, saw the inferiority of his hasty purchase to Archie’s magnificent “Sultan.” He gave up his original intention of dashing past Bettine’s window, and clattered away in an opposite direction, in great bitterness of heart.

CHAPTER XII.

EQUAL.



MONTH passed, during which Archie was pushing sales, was encouraging the men to unusual labors, was saving, scrimping in every possible direction. He worked day and night, sleeping very little, and only very seldom allowing himself the luxury of a ride on Sultan. His overtaxed nerves began to feel the strain, — the slightest thing troubled him; it seemed wonderfully irritating, night after night, to always find little Thumb staring in at that shop window. Poor little Thumb! he never made any other allusion to the treasure now; very timidly he took Archie's hand, and walked silently home.

“ I didn't bother you this time, Archie, did I?” he would sometimes venture, appealingly.

But he only met some brief, absent-minded response, which grieved little Thumb would

talk over with the ever sympathetic Crib. But this great change in Archie, was as much a mystery to the one as the other.

Bettine, too, grieved greatly at the change. He never came to see them any more, and strode past the windows without lifting his eyes.

“He thinks we are all against him, Adeline says; no wonder he looks so unhappy. I must do something to show him I am still his friend.” And Bettine set her busy wits to work.

“Archie,” said Adeline, a week after, “Bettine has sent you a present;” and she held out a pair of prettily worked slippers.

Archie brightened a little. “Has she? Why, how did that happen?”

“She says she has always felt that she owed you a great deal for saving her from the snake last summer.”

“O, and this is to pay a debt!” said Archie, his whole expression changing. “She has set the value of the service a great deal too high.”

“Yes,” whispered the Shadow, who was growing to be an equal, and was listened to with respect, — “this is a mere business transaction; she wishes to pay you; one is only willing to be under obligation to one’s *friends*!”

“Adeline,” said Archie, haughtily, “will you please tell Bettine that the account is entirely crossed out, — she owes me nothing, now !” And with a quick motion the slippers lay upon the grate, and the pretty work which had cost Bettine so much time, besides money that she could ill spare, — was shrivelled, brown, and utterly ruined !

A short time before, Archie could not have done such an ungentlemanly act, no matter how powerfully he felt. It was very painful to see the clear *head* becoming so clouded under the fearful touch of the Shadow !

Of course, Adeline very faithfully reported the scene to Bettine, who could not restrain her tears.

“It almost seems as if he *hated* me ; don’t you think so, Adeline ?”

“It certainly does,” assented Adeline, with charming candor.

Archie more than ever avoided the Leightons’ cottage now, or he would have perceived, as the fall advanced, that some great trouble had befallen them. Bob had been taken from school, and seemed to be running errands, or doing any

odd job that held out the prospect of a shilling. Grandfather Leighton's face had lost something of its peaceful expression, and Bettine, pale and slender, began to look like a plant that had grown in a cellar. The fact was, that the lawsuit — upon which had hung so many hopes — had been finally and decisively settled against them; there was nothing before them now but a ceaseless, grinding struggle with poverty.

Archie first awoke to a consciousness of it, by hearing Adeline remark to her mother —

“I am sure it is more than a fortnight since they have had a mouthful of meat! I have watched the butcher's cart every morning.”

“And Grandfather Leighton has sold his pretty clock, with the sun and moon on it,” added Thumb, wonderingly. “I don't see how he could!”

Archie started; the words were a revelation to him. How completely he had put these old friends from his mind, and when he knew so well what hopes and fears were hanging on this decision! And they had been suffering, while he, every day, passed by on the other side. To be sure they had made no sign. Bettine

had such a strong, brave soul ! How he should have liked her ; how faithful he would have proved himself, if she had only chosen *him* for her friend ! ”

“ Have you done anything for them, Adeline ? ” asked Archie, abruptly.

“ Yes,” said Adeline ; “ I have offered assistance for the first and last time. Such pride as Bettine showed ! One would think I had been offering cold pancakes to the queen ! ”

Archie sighed. He was only too familiar with Adeline’s manner ; it would never do to approach them through such a medium. And yet his generous heart could not allow them to suffer ; he must contrive some way for their relief. All day long he pondered the matter. He had nothing of his own, and every cent he could now scrape together, he felt should belong to Philip. And yet the laborer was worthy of his hire, — he was working with all his strength, he decided that he might honorably allow himself the wages of the poorest workman in his employ. In that case, there would be a few dollars coming to him now.

That night Grandfather Leighton’s wonderful

clock came home again. On one of its hands it carried a little thin paper. "From a friend," was written upon it.

Grandfather Leighton could hardly restrain his tears; he had so greatly missed his life-long companion, with its cheerful, brisk way of striking off the hours. But who could have sent it?

This, however, was not the end of the mysteries. Bob, after making the fire the next morning, was rushing out for his usual pail of water, when he nearly stumbled over a little basket, half thrust under the seat of the porch. Bettine came running at his cry of surprise, and together they examined it. A nice, tender steak, two or three pounds of tea and sugar, and a fresh roll of butter.

"Hurrah!" cried Bob; but Bettine blushed violently.

"I would rather never eat anything but dry bread," said she, "than think" — she finished by a glance at the gray stone house.

"Don't be frightened, Tiny," said Bob, unrolling another little paper, with the simple inscription, "from a friend," "it isn't from *her*, or it would be labelled in capitals — 'from Miss

Adeline Fairchild, benefactress of the poor, and patroness of worthy paupers ! ” ”

“ I think,” mused Grandfather Leighton, “ it may be from our good minister, or possibly from Dr. Bunscombe, he was always a true friend of mine.”

But this was only the beginning. The next morning as Bob opened the door, sighing a little over the good beef-steak, which was now only a pleasant memory, his eyes involuntarily dropped under the seat. Was there a package in brown paper lying there, or not? He dragged it out, quickly disclosing a plump chicken, which held in one stiff claw, the same satisfactory information — “ From a friend.”

The next morning there was another discovery, and the next, and the next, till it came to be hardly a matter of surprise. Sometimes there would be a dozen eggs, or a basket of potatoes, a nice, brown ham, or a bottle of wine for Grandfather Leighton, who was growing so feeble. Still no one had been able to solve the mystery, and Grandfather Leighton began to speak of it as their manna, direct from heaven.

But the help came a little late for Bettine, who, worn out with overwork, the disappointment of her long cherished hopes, and her anxieties about the future, — had gradually fallen into a low, nervous fever.

Then, delicacies began to come, in addition to the more substantial fare; there were late peaches, and heavy clusters of grapes, and little cups of transparent jelly.

“Who has cups like these?” said Bettine, holding one up, in vain attempt to find some clew to the donor.

“No one,” said Bob, “those were bought down at the confectioner’s. I have seen plenty more like them in the window.”

“Bob,” said Bettine, suddenly, with a quick blush, “I’ll tell you what I think sometimes — Philip Fairchild sends them!”

“Never!” frowned Bob; “he’d rather spend the money on himself, any time.”

“You never did Philip justice,” said Bettine. “I am sure he has been very kind lately. Hasn’t he sent me flowers almost every day, and didn’t he give me those pretty blue beads?”

“Yes, just to bother Archie. But the way

these other things have come to us wouldn't suit his style at all; when *he* does anything generous he wants everybody's hands to know it, right and left! It's a hundred times more like Archie."

"It might have been once," said Bettine, sadly, "but we have lost the old Archie. Besides, I'll tell you what makes me sure it cannot be he, — he never would send *me* anything;" she glanced at the beautiful basket of peaches and pears. "He seems to hate me lately."

"Hate you, Tiny!" cried Bob, "What a little goose! You would never think of such a thing if you were not weak and nervous."

"But Adeline isn't weak and nervous, and she thinks so too," said Bettine, trying not to cry as she remembered the slippers.

"Adeline!" screamed Bob, "Adeline!" Of course *Adeline* thinks so!" and he appeared to find such immense fun in the idea, that it took a prolonged standing upon his head, accompanied by most extraordinary struggles with his heels, — to give any adequate expression to his feelings.

Bettine did not feel herself much enlightened

by the pantomime ; but she was too tired to continue the subject.

September had passed, and Uncle Howard had written, postponing his visit till the Holidays. This made Philip a little more patient about the money, which he thought Archie very slow in collecting. But by the middle of October, the five thousand dollars was placed in his hands, with two notes, duly signed by Mr. Falconer, and payable, one in three, the other in six months.

Philip was in excellent spirits ; the store was soon in his possession, and he enjoyed it with all the enthusiasm of a child with a new toy. He was completely absorbed in plans for repairing, painting, and arranging his stock to make the most attractive appearance. Strangely enough he came almost daily to Archie to pour out his confidences and hopes. Perhaps it was because he could better understand them, and perhaps Philip, unconsciously to himself, found a little pleasurable excitement in chafing the passionate nature. Travellers have often found a strange fascination in walking over lava still warm, now and then catching glimpses, through the black chinks, of the fiery, molten mass below.

“ I shall have a very attractive store, Archie,” he would say, cheerfully, “ and all my friends tell me it will be a success. Binder made a great deal of money there the last five years, and I mean to be twice as energetic as he, for I have an object in view. As soon as I am able — as soon as I think it prudent to take an encumbrance,” — Philip laughed, but spoke very slowly, — looking at Archie keenly from under his eyebrows, — “ I intend to make *some one* very happy !”

Archie understood him, but his countenance was immovable, and his gaunt frame, which in a few months seemed to have lost all the roundness of youth, was rigid as marble.

“ You don’t seem to have the least doubt of your ability to accomplish this end,” said he, with slight irony.

“ I haven’t,” said Philip, quietly. “ It may sound conceited, but it’s true that a pleasant look from me will make her happy for a day, now. How will it be when I come to say a few words I have in my mind ! Mother says you and I have always quarrelled from the first moment we set eyes on each other, and have

always wanted the same things. I suppose it has been true up till now ; but I'm very glad, for once, that our tastes have differed."

Archie looked up in some surprise ; had he been mistaken ?

" Who do you mean, Philip ? " he asked, involuntarily. " Not Harriet Bunscombe, or — "

" Pshaw ! no ! " cried Philip, " you know better. I mean — " he stopped and drummed upon the window.

Archie took down a huge folio, and buried himself in its pages. Not that he could read a word, — the print was all a blur, and Philip knew it.

" I mean — " repeated Philip, slowly, " that is, the person I should most delight to honor, is one whom *you* have treated most shamefully. And yet I cannot be angry with you, — I am too much your debtor. You had great advantages over me, Archie, and much the start in the race. But you didn't care for the prize, and I thank you, Archie, — thank you for throwing away — Bettine Leighton ! "

" Who ? " said Archie, looking up absently from his book. " Were you saying anything, Philip ? "

But Philip smiled quietly, and went whistling from the room. His keen eyes had detected the slight start, which Archie could not quite control at sound of that name, although he thought himself prepared. The fact was, he had thought Philip only trifling, at first, — amusing himself with one of those jokes which were such fun to him, and such death to his victims. He, Archie, had thought they were still all boys and girls together, and any serious change in their relations to each other, must be far, very far in the future; he had not realized till that moment of revelation, how fast they had all been growing older — that Philip, indeed, was nearly twenty-one, and he, himself would soon be nineteen. How strange that he hadn't thought of it! Philip and Bettine! Philip and Bettine! What was there in the union of those two names that so roused the Shadow, that made Archie shake in its grasp as if he had the ague? A momentary dread of this fearful companion came over him. How strong it was growing, how strong it had been! What sorrow it had already caused in his life, by falling between him and Bettine. Yes, Philip was right, — he had thrown her

away — to please the Shadow! He was not worthy of her, it was too true; but how would it be with Philip? Would she be happy with him — the selfish Philip? Ah, the dear, *dear* little Bettine!

Archie leaned his head on his hand, — the tenderness of all the past years sweeping over him in an overwhelming tide.

“It is very strange that I must always be so thwarted,” he murmured, “when I might be so immeasurably happy. I have such strong feelings! All these people with their smooth lives know nothing about it, —

—— ‘all their passions unto mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, or as water unto wine.’”

Archie blushed a little, looking uneasily around him; he was glad to find no witness of his conceit. And yet was he so far out of the way? Had he not overheard Banks that very morning, speaking of him as such “a strong character?” “Yes, I must be a *strong* character!” repeated Archie, with a pleasant little pride thrilling through his misery.

His eyes carelessly dropped upon the book still open in his lap. How strange ! an answer to his thought seemed leaping up from the print.

“ You must measure the strength of a man,” he read, “ by the power of the feelings which he subdues, not by the power of those which subdue *him*. A strong character is that of the man who has conquered strong passions ; a weak man, is he who lets strong passions get the mastery of him.”

Archie’s complacency was all gone, as he applied this test to himself.

“ I have been the weakest of the weak in the Past, whatever I may be in the Future !” said he despondently.

“ Archie,” said Adeline, breaking in upon these thoughts. “ Have you heard what Philip is thinking of ?” her eyes were quite red with crying.

Archie nodded.

“ Wouldn’t it be dreadful ?” she continued.

“ A perfect throwing of one’s self away !”

“ It certainly would !” exploded Archie.

“ I was sure you would think so,” said the

gratified Adeline. "A most unworthy person for such a great honor!"

"Unworthy, indeed!" cried Archie, rising precipitately.

Adeline looked after the erect figure, and broad manly shoulders.

"But it might have been worse!" she murmured.

An hour later, that unruly member, which no man can tame, was running on busily, by the side of Bettine.

"And I was saying I thought I knew of some one who liked you, and Archie said —"

"What?" asked Bettine, eagerly.

"I oughtn't to tell," said Adeline, with great reluctance.

"Yes, you *must* tell," said Bettine, two red spots burning in her cheeks, "or I shall not sleep a wink to-night."

"Well, he said, — you wont mind it now?"

"Not the least in the world!"

"He said that this person would just be throwing himself away, — that you were most unworthy —"

"Never mind the rest;" said Bettine, "it

isn't of the slightest consequence," and she took Philip's last flowers, pressing their coolness against her feverish cheeks.

It must be confessed, however, that she slept very little better for having her curiosity gratified.

CHAPTER XIII.

STUMBLING.



ARCHIE had but a short breathing-spell after the payment of the first large sum to Philip. It was now necessary to tax his energies to the utmost, to meet the note due at the first of the coming year; and this he was very eager to do, without causing any anxiety to his father.

“You must spare yourself, Mr. Archie,” old Martyn would sometimes affectionately say. “It is a bad plan for a race-horse to spend all his strength on the first half mile.”

“I shall have strength enough for *this* race,” Archie would return, adding to himself — “and afterwards, it is no consequence to anybody how soon I drop down.”

He was coming home, with a headache, one winter afternoon, feeling it almost a relief not to find little Thumb, waiting at the accustomed

corner, and staring into the window of that toy paradise.

He was feeling more than usually troubled ; his father had been worse for a week, and unable to give him the slightest advice ; there had been annoyances with the workmen, and very small sales for the last few weeks, while the time for the payment of the dreaded note, was drawing so very near. Besides Mrs. Falconer had applied to him for money for household expenses, and he had barely been able to raise the sum she required. He had not a cent that night for the Leightons, and he had given them nothing the day before. To be sure Bettine was better, but she was able to do very little, and they were all looking so pale and dispirited. It was strange Philip did not seem to see it.

“ How *shall* I get over this tight place,” he mused. “ Could I sell Sultan ? ”

Yes, and get a handsome price for him ; but Archie shrank from the sacrifice. He had grown very fond of the noble animal ; besides this was almost the only pleasure he had reserved for himself.

Sultan was a marvel of swiftness, — a “ king

of the wind," and Archie perfectly exulted, after a day of toil, in a wild break-neck ride on his back. Still further, — shall it be confessed? this was a possession which Philip envied him, which he greatly desired to make his own.

"No," Archie had often said, in reply to Philip's offers to buy him, "Sultan is not in your mother's gift, nor my father's, nor Bettine's; it is *mine*! You shall *never* have Sultan!"

But how to get this money?

"There is Mrs. Moppet's teapot!" thought Archie, just as he reached the door. "Why didn't I think of it before? Good, kind soul! it will make her only too happy."

Mrs. Moppet was not in the kitchen, but Archie, going up to his room, heard her voice in conversation with the Thumb.

"Bless his dear heart!" she was saying, "at Christmas time I know he'll have 'em, if not before. I'd buy 'em myself," she added in an undertone, "if Archie hadn't been drinking out of the teapot pretty free. Poor boy! I hope it does him good!" she thought, her kindly eyes filling with tears. She had carried

him, a rosy baby, such a few years ago, and now he was almost as pale an old man as his father.

“You see, Mrs. Moppet,” piped the Thumb, “they wind up, — like a clock, you know, and then there’s a whistle ”—

“Those everlasting cars !” thought Archie, wearily, coming in the door.

There was a fire in his grate, which was unusual, and Mrs. Moppet was soaking little Thumb’s plump feet in some hot water and mustard.

“He’s stuffed with a cold,” explained Mrs. Moppet, “and a bit feverish, and I thought this would do him good.”

“Yes, because Christmas is in three days, and I’ve got to be well on Christmas,” said the Thumb. “I couldn’t come for you to-night, Archie; did you miss me any? didn’t you feel sorry?”

But Archie had only heard, “In three days is Christmas !” Yes, and in a week more it would be New Year; and out came the account book and pencil.

“He doesn’t care, Mrs. Moppet,” quivered little Thumb.

"But I'm sure he does, dear heart," she cried, drawing the sweet face to her broad bosom, where little Thumb could no longer restrain his tears.

"Oh, what is the matter with the child?" said Archie, wearily. "My head aches so!"

Little Thumb, with the greatest effort, repressed the slightest sound.

"He don't feel just right," said Mrs. Moppet, tenderly, carrying him to the bed. "But if you'd just kiss him, and love him a little, I know he'd go right to sleep."

"Yes, and not bother any more!" added little Thumb, eagerly.

Archie's heart smote him, as he kissed the little brother, who had been sadly neglected of late.

"Is there anything more you would like to have me do?" he asked, gently.

"Oh, if you would, Archie!" cried Thumb, with a radiant face, "if you only would play once more on the organ!"

Archie could not refuse, although he had not had the heart to touch the instrument in a long time; its sweet tones jarred upon his mood.

“What shall it be, Thumb?” said he, drawing out the stops.

“‘Now be the Gospel Banner,’ or the ‘March of the Forty Thieves,’ I don’t care which,” said the happy child.

Archie played both those favorites, and then gradually fell into a strain of his own, very low, sweet, and tremulous, with infinite expression. Mrs. Moppet threw her apron over her head, and cried silently in a corner till the last faint note died away. Then she arose to look at little Thumb. He was sound asleep, a hand under one flushed cheek, and his mouth still parted with a smile of delight.

“Come here, Master Archie,” she cried, “don’t he look like a little angel!”

“No,” said Archie, quickly, “only like a rosy, healthy little boy, which is better. I don’t like so much nonsense about angels.”

Mrs. Moppet looked hurt, but the good heart made allowances for the overworked boy. “One can’t expect a mouse to carry an elephant’s load, and feel any ways cheerful about it,” she said to herself.

But the voices, low as they were, had dis-

turbed the sleeping child ; he shivered, frowned, and presently opened wide his wondering blue eyes.

“ Oh, Archie and Moppet,” said he, in a bewildered way, “ did *you* come too? I thought I was going alone.”

“ Where, dear?” said Mrs. Moppet.

“ To our Father’s,” said Thumb, simply.

“ O, that’s nonsense !” said Archie, soothingly ; “ don’t you see you’re lying in your own bed, right in Archie’s room ?”

Little Thumb rubbed his eyes. “ O, yes,” he nodded, “ there’s the fire, and there’s Crib, and there’s the dear organ. I must have come back.”

“ But you haven’t been away, Thumb.”

“ Yes, I have, — climbing up, and climbing up ! don’t you see how tired I am ?”

Archie looked uneasily at Mrs. Moppet.

“ It’s nothing,” said she, “ he’s been dreaming, and he always talks odd, when he’s started from sleep. Then you know he’s always ramb-
lin’ about that road to his Father’s house, dear lamb ! That’s nothing new. If you’d play again, a minute, he’d drop right off.”

Archie obeyed, and presently Mrs. Moppet's words were verified, and she stole softly from the room.

Archie followed after her, and stopped her on the landing, hastily explaining his present embarrassment, and asking her if she remembered her offer of part of the little fortune in the teapot?

Mrs. Moppet stammered and hesitated. It really seemed, lately, as if Archie must be losing his senses. Hadn't he been taking it all along, just as it pleased him? Hadn't she seen him with her own eyes, one night, in the faint firelight, while she — dear, substantial old cherub! — had hovered perilously at the top of the kitchen stairs? And now to have him come, asking so innocently for five dollars or so — she didn't like it; it didn't seem quite fair and above board. She never would have thought it of Archie! and the good soul was almost ready to cry.

In the mean time, Archie's face was darkening. "It is no matter," said he, stiffly, "you have a perfect right to change your mind."

"Why, no," said she, more embarrassed

than ever. "You are kindly welcome to it, — just as welcome as you have ben all along."

Archie's sensitive ear detected the slight coolness and annoyance in her tone. He could not understand it, but he would not ask her to explain.

"She is only turning against me like all the rest," said he, sadly. "I will be indebted to no one."

That evening he sold Ned Bunscombe a handsome dressing-case, — a present in the days of his father's prosperity, — and, in that way, the Leightons were provided with a turkey for the holidays, and the materials for the best of Christmas puddings.

Little Thumb was not much better the next morning.

"If I don't come to-day, again, will you be sorry, Archie?" he asked, anxiously.

"Yes, I shall," said Archie, honestly and heartily; and the Thumb was radiant.

At night he found him still in bed, and Mrs. Falconer seemed to be feeling it her duty to take some notice of him, by prescribing some disagreeable potions, which poor Thumb most patiently swallowed.

Adeline was there too, — very officious, shaking up little Thumb's pillows, and offering him a drink every five minutes.

“I intend to stay with Wilfred this evening,” she said, sweetly. “I know so many ways to make sick people comfortable.”

Little Thumb looked wistfully at Archie.

“Thumb isn't ‘sick people,’ Adeline,” said Archie, a little ungraciously, perhaps. “All he wants now is to be allowed to go to sleep.”

“But I have stayed home from an evening party, on purpose to make myself useful,” said Adeline, reproachfully.

Archie knew it was a most ungrateful task to prevent Adeline from being a martyr when she had so fully made up her mind to it; but with a great deal of tact, and profusion of compliments upon her well-known abilities, he finally succeeded in bowing her from the room.

Little Thumb's cheeks were very red after the contest.

“Isn't he the picture of health!” said Archie, admiringly.

Mrs. Moppet shook her head. “Not to my mind,” said she, in a low voice; “that color

isn't nateral, it's more like a dab of paint from a fever-pot. I 'most wish Dr. Brown could see him."

Archie made an impatient gesture, as he bent over to kiss and embrace him, in his old passionate way, — the child's simple, wondering gratitude filling him with remorseful pain.

"You would never go away and leave Archie, *would* you, Thumb?"

"Why, no!" said the child, in great surprise, "how could I!"

"Some little children *die*, you know." The words seemed to leap from Archie's lips, in spite of him.

"O, *I* won't die!" said little Thumb, cheerfully. "I don't mean ever to die." Archie held him tighter. "I'm going to find the way to our Father's by the crumbs, don't you know? But I'll be sure to come back for you, Archie, — no matter if I'm ever so tired."

"Don't let's talk about that any more, little Thumb," said Archie, tenderly. "You can't understand it now, but when you get older I'm going to show you how it's only people's *souls* that can pick up those kind of crumbs; these

dear little feet here," Archie took them in his hands, "could never find that way."

"O, yes, they could!" said Thumb, confidently. "I found out how to go just a little while ago."

Archie did not understand him. But it had happened a short time before, in the mists of a late Indian summer, little Thumb had rode by a solemn grove of pine-trees, through which the sun — sinking low in the west — gleamed like a glorious shechinah; and the innocent heart believed that he had had a glimpse of his Father's house.

"Shall I play for you, Thumb?" said Archie; and as he eagerly assented, he sat down, playing more than an hour, but not with the usual effect. The child only half dozed, and all night long, Archie, who slept but lightly himself, was conscious of restless limbs tossing to and fro, till, at last, he awoke to find Thumb's eyes staring, while he talked incessantly about "climbing, climbing," and he was getting "so very tired."

Archie called Mrs. Moppet, and went for the physician.

Dr. Brown made a long examination, and looked very grave.

“It seemed a slight attack of fever,” he said, “and yet he felt anxious, as the child, in spite of his apparent health, had no constitution whatever. Besides,” — he took Mrs. Moppet aside “had they ever thought he had any trouble with his heart?”

“Never!” answered Mrs. Moppet. “And yet,” she added, in a troubled way, “that was what took off his dear mamma!”

But little Thumb brightened greatly before it was time for Archie to go to the office.

“Do you know to-night is Christmas Eve?” said Archie, bending over him, with a lighter heart. “We must hang up our stockings.”

Thumb nodded, with a little laugh, putting up his rosy mouth.

“I don’t think I can come to-day, Archie; do you think you will miss me?”

“Terribly! terribly, little Thumb!” cried Archie, rushing away, his eyes blinded with tears.

The day seemed very long, for through all the business details — more vexing and compli-

cated than usual — Archie's heart was with little Thumb. How he almost flew along the street, when the hour of release came ! he only made one stop, — at the toy-store, — to purchase the wonderful cars.

“ How pleased he will be ! ” thought Archie. “ I almost wish I had bought them before.”

He showed them gayly to Mrs. Moppet, whom he met coming out of the sick room.

She only began to cry, saying, “ I'm very glad you've come, Master Archie. They all say he's better, but ” — she shook her head.

Archie hastily entered the room. How it annoyed him to find so many there ! His father, — of course, that was right that he should be sitting by the bed. How anxious he must have been, by the way, to have climbed the stairs, with his short breath and persistent cough. But his stepmother, and especially, officious Adeline, how he wished them both away !

“ He is sleeping very sweetly,” said Adeline, in gracious encouragement, as he came up to the bed.

But one quick glance justified Mrs. Moppet's

uneasiness. The flush had left little Thumb's cheeks, and a most unnatural pallor was showing through the healthy tan, which had not yet had time to wear off. His eyes, too, seemed to have grown hollow, as he slept heavily, one brown hand lying caressingly on Crib, — the other grasping a piece of painted cardboard.

While Archie still gazed anxiously, Thumb's long lashes trembled, and he opened his eyes, dreamily.

“ Ah, Archie ! ” said he, in glad recognition, “ did you know I had found a crumb ? See there, Archie,” he held up an illuminated text, “ I found it going to our Father's — ‘ Suffer little children — ’ ”

“ Ah little Wilfred ! little Wilfred ! ” said Adeline, quite shocked. “ Didn't Bettine paint it for you, and send it over for your stocking ? Think now, you wouldn't tell a story, Wilfred ! ”

Little Thumb looked troubled, his lip quivered. “ I think I picked it up ! ” he repeated, looking wistfully at Archie.

“ He did ! of course he did ! ” cried Archie, with a quick frown at Adeline ; at the same time intercepting her, as she came forward with a tumbler of water.

“ Thank you. I will take care of my little brother now, — it is my place,” he said, decidedly.

“ Archie,” murmured Thumb, stretching up a feeble hand to caress his face, “ did you miss me at the corner, to-day? I’ll be there to-morrow. I’ll be there every day, after this, but I got very tired going to our Father’s house; I went a great ways to-day.”

“ See here, little Thumb,” said Archie, with a desperate attempt at cheerfulness. “ Santa Claus has sent something splendid for your stocking, but I thought I’d give it to you now. See, darling!” And before the misty, blue eyes, Archie held up the long wished-for, wonderful train of cars.

Such a faint smile, such a very faint smile! Little Thumb laid his small hand upon them — the treasure at which he had so often gazed through those tantalizing shop windows, — going into such ecstasies of delight when the good-natured man had set them off, — now lay upon the white quilt, all little Thumb’s own! Even while he was trying to realize it, his eyes closed; but in a minute he started.

“ Did I say ‘ thank you,’ Archie ? ” he asked anxiously.

He tried feebly to lift them, — dropped them again, and then pushed them gently aside, — forever !

“ I am going to sleep now, Archie,” said he, the lids once more drooping over the sweetest eyes, “ Would you like to kiss me ? And then play, Archie.”

“ I can’t ! I can’t ! ” cried Archie’s heart ; but could he refuse anything to the little Thumb ? He arose, almost feeling his way to the organ. Such entreating, imploring waves of sound ! Mrs. Moppet fell upon her knees.

“ Master Archie is praying,” she sobbed, “ and I will pray with him.”

Tremulous, sweet, with almost a divine inspiration, the strains arose and fell.

Bettine, coming softly, paused on the threshold of the door, thrilled and awed to her heart. She had never heard Archie play so before. There was an unearthly expression on his face ; he seemed lifted out of himself, — as if, in his eager entreaty, he had pierced even to the mystery of the great King’s presence, — as if he

had caught the key note of the harpers, harping with harps, — as if he saw the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne !

Every one was in tears, excepting the child. With a smile of the sweetest content, — the precious crumb held tightly in his small brown hand, — little Hop o' my Thumb was making the last few steps of his short journey, and finding his way safely home to his Father's house.

“ Is he asleep ? ” asked Archie, at last, pausing suddenly.

Mrs. Moppet bowed her head solemnly. There was a sound of weeping.

“ I suppose this is very sudden and unexpected to you, Mr. Falconer,” broke in the formal voice of Dr. Brown ; “ but any trouble with the heart — ”

Archie turned deathly pale.

Bettine, forgetting everything, ran to him, impulsively taking both his hands.

“ It is such a happy thing for little Thumb to go to-night,” she said, as with streaming tears, she repeated a beautiful superstition, “ ‘ The gates of heaven are always standing wide open on Christmas Eve ! ’ ”

But Archie's eyes were dry. He went calmly towards the bed where Crib was licking one motionless hand ; he pressed one long kiss upon the quiet mouth. " Of whom the world was not worthy," he murmured ; and went away to wander — God only knew where — through all that winter night.

Poor, comfortless Archie ! now angry with earth and with Heaven ! The Shadow was filling all the way with gloom, and still he turned resolutely from the Light, and went stumbling on in his darkening path.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SHADOW IS MASTER.



LITTLE Thumb's precious dust lay under the snow, — those loveliest eyes closed so peacefully — the little every day blue ribbon tied at his throat, the precious "crumb" still in the hands that had so clung to it, — and all hidden away forever.

After the first violence of the shock, Archie had gathered up all his strength to meet this greatest trouble. Heaven also, seemed to be arraying itself against him, but the proud spirit determined to bear it without complaining. He went through all the trying last scenes with a cold reserve and dignity, which would have prevented most people from offering him the stereotyped forms of consolation. But Adeline knew her duty.

"Archie," said she coming to him, as he sat

in the dusk, upon the evening of that sad day,
“our light affliction, which is but for a —”

“Yes, Adeline,” interrupted Archie, “don’t trouble yourself, — it is perfectly familiar to me.”

“But I should like so much to comfort you !”

“Thank you. I will take the will for the deed.”

“He doth not willingly afflict,” continued the persistent Adeline, straining her eyes to consult a little paper she held in her hand, “nor chide —”

Archie got up abruptly, stammered an apology, and hurried away to his room. As he opened the door, Crib, who had been shut up all the afternoon, sprang at him joyfully, and then retreated with a low whine of disappointment. Archie well understood him, as with a throbbing head, he threw himself into a chair by the dead ashes of the grate. Presently the cold nose timidly touched his hand, — the poor animal had crept nearer, his wistful eyes fixed upon him, and his body curved in mute entreaty.

“Yes, Crib,” said Archie, caressing him impulsively, “I understand you. We must be

friends. We must always be friends. We both loved him, Crib, and we will neither of us ever see him again ! ”

A light flickered along the hall.

“ And who must be coming now ? ” said Archie, wearily.

The door opened, and Mrs. Moppet, her face swollen and red, appeared.

“ I’ve brought you some tea and toast, Master Archie,” she said, “ and now, dear, you *must* try to think that God is good, or your poor heart will break. You know he sees we haven’t enough of him in our heart, and he jest sends these ’flections to bring us ’round like.”

“ Yes, Mrs. Moppet,” said Archie, in his strange, composed way, “ I know the Lord hasn’t been in my heart. ‘ Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.’ But he wasn’t here, and I didn’t know how to get him here, and so he has punished me for it.”

“ No ! no ! Master Archie,” said Mrs. Moppet, eagerly, “ it wasn’t for punishment, but for *love*.”

“ Such a strange love ! ” said Archie. “ It may win some natures, but it never could mine.

If He had left me little Thumb, I might possibly have been drawn nearer heaven, but he has seen fit to take away almost my only comfort. I cannot love such a cruel God !”

“ Oh, Master Archie ! Master Archie ! that I should ever live to hear you say such dreadful things !” cried Mrs. Moppet, bursting into vehement sobbing.

“ Go away, please, Mrs. Moppet,” said Archie, after a few minutes, during which the grief of the simple old creature annoyed him beyond measure. “ You needn’t feel uneasy to leave me alone. Besides, Crib will stay. Crib is a great comfort ; he loves me, and he doesn’t know one word of the Bible !”

Mrs. Moppet stared a minute in blank dismay, then, catching up her candle, she hurried away as if she were frightened.

“ I’ve lost ’em both !” Archie heard the poor soul sob ; her heavy step grown heavier, as she stumbled down the hall.

“ How I have shocked and troubled her !” thought he. “ It is cruel ! Mrs. Moppet !” he called, repentantly, thrusting his head from the door.

But only the echoes answered; she was already out of hearing.

The next morning, Archie arose, and with stern resolution, put the sad Past behind him. He had no strength to waste in vain regrets, — the Future required all his energies. He had a great work to do; he must run no risk of failure.

“Archie,” said Mr. Falconer, tenderly, as Archie came in to bid him ‘good-morning,’ “God has been very merciful to me. He has taken my little lamb, but he has left me the son that I lean upon, — my strong son, Archie!”

Archie pressed his father’s hand, too much moved to speak. This affection first smote the rock, and he could not restrain his tears. He had thought, that morning, that he should never care for anything again; but those words had certainly given him a faint pleasure.

“*I will* be his strong son,” he murmured; his indomitable heart giving one of its old, ambitious throbs. “I will make greater exertions than ever. I will extricate my father’s business from all its embarrassments, and place it on the soundest basis. And I shall do more. I

have lost a great deal in life, and I am all through with *loving* anything, forever, — forever!" he repeated firmly. "But the world has a great many prizes to offer a man. I will do something to make myself known and famous. Bettine shall yet see that she made a great mistake; and Thumb, little Thumb! perhaps they would let him know of it in heaven, — he used to be so proud" — Archie utterly broke down. "Pshaw! what nonsense I am talking! I must begin something hard and practical, right away; I must try to invent something again. Yes, anything to keep me from thinking of these two; I must drive them both out, — one is as dead to me as the other."

He was just passing into the street, when his eyes fell upon Crib, who had followed him closely all the morning, and now paused at the gate, with a wistful wagging of his tail.

"Yes," said Archie, "you may come, Crib, poor, lonely Crib!"

The dog joyfully sprang after, and thenceforward they were inseparable.

Archie had, indeed, but little leisure for grief, in the busy days that followed. The first

note to Mr. Binder was met by almost superhuman exertions ; he thought till nearly the last minute that it would be protested. An unexpected sale at the eleventh hour, and a prompt cash payment, alone saved the honor of the firm.

“ But such hours are terrible, sir ! ” said Martyn ; grasping Archie’s hand. “ They make one grow old. And they’re too much for you. Unless there’s some one to put a shoulder to the wheel this next three months, I think we shall say good-by to all the Falcons ! ” The faithful old man’s voice trembled. “ You can’t live through much more like this ! ”

“ Nonsense ! ” cried Archie, rising, and wiping his forehead. “ No, thank you ! ” as Martyn tried to force on him a little wine. “ I feel quite well. We keep this office too warm, I think, — it makes one a little faint.” And proud Archie walked away as vigorously as ever, his tall form very erect.

“ I never saw such a spirit as there is in that boy ; ” said Banks to Martyn. “ It makes one uneasy, sometimes ; because, you know, in this world, we must all give up, now and then ; and what wont bend, must *break*.”

Archie hastened home, and burst into the library. "It is all right, father," he cried, excitedly, "the note has been met!"

And again he had the satisfaction of seeing his father's face light up with pride, while he murmured once more, "My *strong* son, Archie!"

In the meantime, the supplies at the Leigh-ton's had been continued, with only a slight interruption; and how had Archie been able to do it?

"Miss Bettine," cried Mrs. Moppet, only a day or two after this crisis; "be you goin' down to the city, dear? and would you mind doin' an errant for *me*?"

Bettine stopped on her way, and came smiling into the kitchen.

"I want you to buy me a black alpaccy, dear, if you would obligate me so much. I don't want no kind of shine on it—jest the very deadeest kind of dead black alpaccy; a rayther full patron,—I should say a yard more'n you'd git for *yourself*."

Bettine could not forbear a faint smile at this modest allowance. In size, she bore

about the same relation to Mrs. Moppet, that a graceful young willow does to a banyan-tree.

“And I’m not goin’ to ask you to mistrust me,” said Mrs. Moppet, with a pleasant pride. “I’ve plenty of good money all earned by my own hands;” and she took down the little teapot.

“Why, what is the matter?” cried Bettine; as she saw the good woman turn very pale, and sink, gasping, into a chair.

“I didn’t think — he ever could have done it!” faltered Mrs. Moppet. “It isn’t like him! I wouldn’t have believed it; no, if forty angels come down a purpose to swear to it!”

“Who? what?” cried Bettine, more alarmed than ever, to see Mrs. Moppet wipe her streaming eyes on a dish-towel, a proceeding, which, in full possession of her senses, the scrupulously cleanly soul would have viewed with horror.

“Master Archie!” said Mrs. Moppet, in the deepest grief, “I told him he was kindly welcome to it all — most a hundred dollars, Miss Bettine — all but enough to buy me a black alpaccy, and —”

“ And he has taken it all ? ” cried Bettine, gazing into the empty teapot, her face flushing with a regret quite equal to Mrs. Moppet's. She had known Archie to be far from perfect, but all his faults hitherto had seemed to have an element of nobility ; *this* revealed a phase of character she had not thought possible. She would have thought he would have denied himself everything, rather than take the slightest advantage of the simple old creature's generosity. And to think that he had not left her a cent !

“ It is shameful ! ” she cried. “ O, Mrs. Moppet, I think we have lost our old Archie forever ! ” She burst into tears.

“ There now, what hev I ben sayin' ! ” said Mrs. Moppet, uneasily. “ Miss Bettine, I'm a poor old creetur', half daft sometimes ; maybe I never had any money in this teapot. Maybe I jest dreamed it — jest as like as not. Don't never speak of it, Miss Bettine.”

“ No, never ! ” cried Bettine, quite understanding the pious fraud.

“ And as for the alpaccey, I don't need it, no more'n a cat needs two tails. I've got a nice bomber — to be sure I mourned for Mr.

Moppet into it, but I was always careful of spots, it will be jest as good as new, come to give it a turn."

Bettine made her little purchases in the city, and was returning very thoughtfully, when she was joined by Philip.

They had only gone a few steps, when Archie came dashing by, mounted on Sultan. He had felt the need of some stimulus, in the reaction, following his days of unusual excitement. Very handsome he looked as he passed, bending towards Bettine, impulsively, a swift, yearning expression on his pale face, as if he would have cried with Lenore's phantom lover,

"Hurrah! Hurrah! the dead ride fast!

Dost fear to ride with me?"

Bettine changed color, shivering a little.

"What a hold that horse has taken upon the girl's imagination!" thought Philip, discontentedly. "I must manage to have it! In some way Sultan *must* be mine."

In all the gratification which the Past had brought him, — in all the pleasure which the future was promising him, — this was still the

roc's egg, without which, Philip's palace of happiness was incomplete.

"It is hard to see that splendid creature in the hands of such a passionate owner!" said Philip, by way of giving Bettine's thoughts a profitable turn.

"But he is gentleness itself to Sultan," said Bettine, quickly, "Bob says it is quite wonderful to see how the horse loves him."

"Yes, but if once he should be angry with the poor brute! You know, Archie, in his passions, does not respect the confidence of any living creature. I think he is gradually losing all his nobility of character. Remember, Bettine, I admit that he is very brilliant and fascinating, so is lightning; they would both make very poor house companions!" he looked at her keenly.

Bettine sighed. Her grandfather had sadly said almost as much that very morning.

Uncle Howard was now expected in a very few days, and Philip had made great exertions to have everything in readiness to make the very best impression.

"You must come in to-night, Archie," he

said, good-naturedly, one day. "Stop on your way home, and see if I haven't everything fitted up in style."

Archie had not the least idea of complying with this request, and still less did he feel like it, as the dreary winter day drew to a close. It had been a peculiarly annoying day, even among so many that had been crowded with disappointment. He had spent a great many hours over his new invention, but some trifle was lacking, at every trial it just fell a little short of the end required.

"I must, I *will* conquer it," Archie had cried, again and again, bending feverishly over the work.

But his mind seemed to refuse to work, and, at last, in a transport of rage, he had risen, taken a heavy hammer, and in a moment, had laid the delicate model in ruins.

Just then, in came Martyn, in deep dejection. A large quantity of castings had been returned, on account of some defect. He also brought with him two letters,—one countermanding a large order for mowing machines, which the man had ascertained could be made cheaper

elsewhere,—the other, announcing the failure of a firm, which was owing them largely.

Archie read them without a word.

“The old ship is sinking, sir!” said Martyn, the tears rolling down his cheeks, “we might have weathered it, if Mr. Philip’s money hadn’t stove such a hole in our bottom; I was fearful we couldn’t stand such a leak.”

It was night; the workmen were going home grimy and tired. Archie too arose, and silently went his way.

The foundry fires burned red and sullen; the wind sobbed and shrieked. Life looked so dreary! “The whole world travaileth and groaneth in pain,”—the thought came in Archie’s mind, as he stumbled along.

“I am very wretched,” he said to himself, “and I owe it all to Philip. He has been the blight of my life; every disappointment I can trace to him, and I—” he was going to say *hate* him, but he stopped short, with a quick pang at his heart. Unconsciously he had taken his old path, by way of the toy-shop, a place he had hitherto avoided. He could not pass the spot, where little Thumb, with almost his

last breath, had promised to be waiting for him always.

“He is there now,” Archie murmured, “but I am no company for little Thumb to-night. Come away, Crib,” said he to the dog running eagerly around the shop window, snuffing here and there in his vain, anxious quest. Archie could not bear any more; he turned away, abruptly, into the next street, and before he knew it, had blindly stumbled upon another of the places he most wished to avoid.

“So you have come!” cried Philip, gayly, standing in the door of his brilliantly lighted store. “I hardly thought you would. But come in, and let me show you how complete I have made everything.”

Archie wanted to refuse, and yet some strange impulse drew him on. He went in, and the Shadow, strong and dark, entered with him.

Philip was quite delighted to show his treasures. Everything had been going on so much to his satisfaction lately, he could well afford to be gracious. He displayed his handsome books, his pretty trifles, his paintings, and hardly less

beautiful chromos; everything was very bright and attractive.

“Now I'll show you up stairs,” said the voluble Philip. “There's some rubbish here, not quite arranged, but you see everything will be very pleasant and convenient. One of my clerks is to sleep in this little back room; he wasn't quite ready to come to-night, and I think I shall stay myself. But here, sit down a minute,” said he, as they emerged into the larger room, “I have something I wanted to show you.”

He placed before him a large package, directed to “Miss Bettine Leighton.”

“I didn't mean to open it again, but I may as well,” he laughed; he seemed brimming over with pleasurable excitement.

“Isn't that a present fit for a queen?” said he, complacently, as Archie turned over the elegant books, and mechanically examined the fine wood-work and silver hinges of a beautiful writing-desk.

“Of course I shouldn't give so much to any one,” he continued, “except the person whose interests I expect to be the same as my own.”

There was a minute of profound silence.

“Is it all settled then?” asked Archie.

Philip started. “Why, how queerly you spoke! I thought at first, that it came from the other side of the room. Are you anything of a ventriloquist, Archie?”

Archie shook his head.

“I wish you would speak out, and not look and act so like a ghost,” said Philip, lightly. “If it were nearer midnight, I should be actually afraid of you!”

Archie forced a smile. “You didn’t answer my question, Philip.”

“Didn’t I? O, no! Well,”—and then came the pause which Archie ought to have expected, but for which he was never prepared.

Philip tied the parcel carefully again, arranged some loose papers, and then took out his knife to pare his nails.

In the meantime, Archie’s eyes were fixed upon a map hanging just over the desk, and fluttering to and fro in the night wind, which came through a broken pane in a window hard by. It seemed to be coquetting with the gaslight, creeping stealthily towards it, almost

reaching it, and then falling back. There was quite a fascination in it, and Archie, watching, almost forgot the answer which Philip unusually delayed. He woke up, at last, to hear, —

“ Why, yes, you might call it so ; she has given me the most flattering reasons for believing it ; but I suppose the matter will be *formally* settled to-morrow night. My mother has given her consent, and I have written to Bettine. She will get the note to-morrow, and to-morrow evening I shall go for my answer. I am pretty sure what it will be, though, so sure, that I shall take my present with me,” he laughed. “ I didn’t know it would be half so pleasant to feel one’s self a man, and well enough off to be able to take such a step. Don’t you think Bettine has grown remarkably pretty lately ? More delicate and refined ? ”

Archie, with his head leaning on his hand, did not answer. He was thinking of so many, many years ago, before Philip had ever intruded on his life, when he used to play from morning till night with this same fair little, rare little Bettine, when they had been all in all to each other. She had always been delicate, like a

brilliant little humming-bird among the grosser winged tribes. He remembered how they had together gone to school, he so jealously guarding her, carrying her over the mud, wading with her through the brook, — no one dared to interfere with him then. But Philip, his evil genius! *Philip* had not hesitated to thrust himself between!

He paused in his torrent of thought, with a sudden conviction. Was it Philip, or was it the Shadow which had first fallen between him and Bettine? The Shadow, which he hadn't conquered, and which was so fearfully strong to-night, that if it should bid him do anything, — no matter what, — Archie feared he should obey it like a slave!

“But *Bettine*,” said Archie to himself, once more, “is it too late to do anything? Could I not yet go to her, ask her forgiveness for my injustice and passion, and beg her once more to choose between us?”

“And a great deal you have to offer her,” whispered the Shadow. “What has Philip left you? Wouldn't it be generous to ask her to share your ruin?”

“Dear me!” said Philip, rousing himself from a very different reverie. “Where *have* you been?”

‘By thy black waves, tremendous Styx, that flow
Through the drear realms of gliding ghosts below’?”

he laughed. “Come, do look and act a little more like flesh and blood.”

Archie's eyes were again attracted to the jet of flame, and the fluttering map.

“Philip,” said he, suddenly, “are the papers of conveyance all made out? is this property all your own?”

“Every bit my own,” said Philip, triumphantly. “To be sure, it makes one uneasy sometimes, to think of having every cent in one venture, — but I guess it's a good thing. My sales have been excellent to-day.”

“Is the store insured?” asked Archie.

“O, yes, Mr. Binder has quite a heavy insurance upon it, and it doesn't expire till May.”

“Has it been made out in your name?”

“Why, no, not yet; that's no consequence, you know. Mr. Binder would get it in case of accident, and pay it right over to me.”

Archie stared a minute. Could it be possible that Philip was so ignorant? that he didn't know that the insurance policy in Mr. Binder's hands was not the slightest protection to property belonging to Philip Fairchild, — that it was worth no more than the loose straw blowing about the floor? It had been a great carelessness in Mr. Binder not to arrange this matter, when he found Philip such a novice in all business details.

“Tell him, yourself,” suggested every generous feeling. “Tell him there should be no delay in attending to such an important matter.”

Archie opened his mouth, but again his eyes wandered to that little tongue of flame.

“What if *something* should happen to-night?” whispered the Shadow. “What if in the morning Philip should be walking the streets a greater beggar than you are? What if, after stretching you upon the rack all these months, he should take *his* turn upon the bed of torture, lose everything he has, give up Bettine, — for years, at least, — feel as you have felt this one day of misery!”

Archie struggled with his tempter, but again

that strange fascination drew him to the coquetting map, and the treacherous light. Now a fiercer gust of wind drew it so very near! Archie held his breath.

“What if Philip, always a little careless, should leave this light burning when he went to bed, and in the night the wind should push it just a little nearer, with its careless, wicked fingers!”

“If you should push the light the least trifle that way, yourself!” suggested the Shadow.

Archie recoiled in horror. “Oh no! Oh, no! I will have nothing to do with it!”

He took out his handkerchief, and wiped his cold, wet forehead; he was in a dripping perspiration.

“What a fool I am!” thought Archie, rising. “I have had a fearful dream while I sat there. I am growing morbid and childish. Of course nothing will happen. Philip will turn out the light, and to-morrow I will explain to him about the insurance.”

“Good night,” said Philip, “I believe I wont come to the door again. I have such a neuralgia all the right side of my face.”

“ Chloroform is good,” said Archie, absently.

“ That is what I have,” returned Philip, holding a little bottle to his nose.

Archie went out, carefully avoiding the corner where Thumb might be waiting; and all the way home a little point of flame danced before him, with the foolish map creeping, creeping up to the bright object whose kiss would be destruction.

The winter wind seemed to be gathering strength, and coming in fiercer gusts, as he went on. How it must be drawing through that broken pane! He stopped at the last corner where he could catch a glimpse of the upper window; the light was still burning brightly.

“ I might at least have stuffed a paper in the pane,” he thought, uneasily. “ Pshaw! Philip will certainly put it out. How he would laugh at me if I went back!”

“ How late you are, Archie,” said his father, as he entered the library. “ I have just been sitting up to introduce you to Mr. Howard Fairchild. Mr. Fairchild, said Mr. Falconer, proudly, “ this is my son, Archie, of whom I have been speaking to you.”

A fine looking, gray-haired man came forward, taking Archie's hand cordially. Archie liked him from the minute he looked upon him. He had the face of one who had suffered and grown strong, and there was a deep, settled peace in it, which poor Archie looked upon with envy; it was not the stolid placidity of a soul which has never been tossed with tempest, but a calm which only comes when — after fearful storms — Jesus has walked over the stormy waves, and bade them, — “Peace be still.” But Archie did not understand this now, he only felt it.

Uncle Howard, on his part, also looked keenly at Archie. What did he see in that pale face? too much care, and too much gloom for his years.

Archie turned away suddenly from the searching glance, as he thought — “Perhaps he sees the Shadow! he would hate me if he saw the Shadow.”

“We must know each other better, Archie,” said Uncle Howard, in his frank, hearty tone. “I foresee that we shall be great friends.”

Archie thanked him with a smile which had something of its old sweetness.

“A strangely interesting face,” said Mr. Fairchild, in a low tone to the gratified father.

“I think you have reason to be proud of him.”

“I wish you could see Philip,” said Mrs. Falconer, uneasily, “he has been so anxious for you to come, and he didn’t, in the least, expect you to-night. He is completely wrapped up in his business now; we all think he takes after his uncle.”

“I hope he will be a great improvement on his uncle,” returned he, with his quiet smile.

“Thank you, Adeline, that will do, my dear,”

For the officious Adeline was bustling about, bringing him a footstool, adjusting a fire-screen, offering the evening paper, and all with the greatest care that her light should not be hidden under any bushel of over modesty, “See,” every obtrusive act seemed to say, “See how thoughtful I am! how unselfish! I do not spare myself at all!”

“If Adeline has a fault,” murmured the pleased mother, “it is too much self-sacrifice.”

As soon as politeness would permit, Archie stole away to his room, to try and think over the business, and see if there were any way of

extricating himself. More and more hopeless grew his face over the unrelenting figures; stronger and darker grew the Shadow sitting at his side.

“It is all Philip,” said the Shadow. “Philip is another name for disappointment, misery, wickedness and ruin !

Archie bent over his paper; he made a few strokes with his pencil, then started at the result. What had he been doing? He had drawn a jet of gas, and a paper map fluttering out to meet it !

He raised his eyes, and caught a glimpse of himself in a little mirror over the mantle. Was it indeed himself? A phrase he had somewhere met, flashed across his mind, — “Indulged revenge makes one diabolical !”

“That is true !” murmured Archie, while he wondered — would little *Thumb* know him if he saw him to-night?

A sudden knock at the door set his heart beating violently. He had a strange sensation that his nerves were all lying bare.

“Master Archie, Master Archie ! could I speak to you one minute ?”

It was only Mrs. Moppet. But she had been very cold to Archie, lately, she had avoided him. He knew he had shocked her, but he had thought her love stronger, he had thought she would have had some homely word of comfort for him in all these days of trouble ; her neglect had hurt him — touched him deeply through all his panoply of pride and stoicism.

“ I cannot see any one to-night, Mrs. Moppet,” he said.

The old woman hesitated, deeply disappointed ; it seemed as if she could not wait to tell him a discovery she had made. Just the night before, hearing a noise in the kitchen, she had flung on a wrapper, and stolen softly down. She had felt that she could not any longer bear this separation from Master Archie ; she would catch him in the very act of which he had pretended such innocence, — he, of course, would have some kind of an explanation, and, no matter what it was, the foolish, fond old creature meant to take him in her arms, and freely, fully forgive him.

It turned out as she expected, — there he was at the cupboard, his very hands on the teapot.

“And what are you doing there?” she had cried sharply.

The boy turned, — very white, as she could see, even by the faint coals on the hearth, — and behold ! instead of Archie, it was — Philip Fairchild !

“I wanted a bag of salt to lay on my cheek for the toothache, Mrs. Moppet,” said he.

“And what made you think I kept salt in that little old teapot?” Mrs. Moppet asked, pointing to his hands in which he still held it.

Philip could no longer dissemble, but he put a brave face on it.

“I have a confession to make to you, Mrs. Moppet,” said he, laughing lightly. “Some time ago, I was in most pressing need for money, I was very anxious to buy a *horse*. (Philip frowned a little as he remembered the sorry mare, which had never been anything but a mortification to him, and which he had scarcely taken from the stable after the first week !) Well, as I said before, I wanted money, and I couldn't get it because it was all locked up in Mr. Falconer's business ;” Mrs. Moppet shrugged her shoulders, — “so, happening to

overhear something about this teapot bank, I concluded to draw on it for awhile, intending, do you hear Mrs. Moppet? to put back every cent with *interest*. And I came to make the first instalment to-night. Look," and he held out the teapot, in which lay a roll of twenty-five dollars.

Mrs. Moppet gazed at it speechlessly.

"You see," continued Philip, drawing himself up, "the honor of the Fairchilds is beyond suspicion."

"Them is fine words," said Mrs. Moppet, doubtfully, "and I don't know that I quite sense their meanin'. But it seems to me that if there's a fence 'tween right and wrong, one of the Fairchilds has had a leg pretty well on the wrong side."

Philip laughed, but colored deeply.

"Very good, Mrs. Moppet; but you see both legs are right now; and as for the money, you shall have it all in a week, with the interest, you know; it has been an excellent investment for you. But," he added, eagerly, "I hope you wont speak of the matter, Mrs. Moppet. Some people are so uncharitable, and they might

misunderstand — but, of course, *you* know, I hadn't a thought of wrong."

"I wont tattle about it," sighed Mrs. Moppet, "and I'll try to believe you meant right. The only thing I can't quite forgive, is that you've been giving me such hard thoughts of poor Master Archie, so that I've jest let his heart go on breakin', and haven't had never a kind word to throw at him these three weeks. I can't git over that in a minute, Mr. Philip!"

And this was what she was longing to tell Archie, as she lingered at the door.

"If you'd only let me say three words, Master Archie," pleaded she. "I've been wrongin' you in my thoughts, and I'd sleep better, if you'd jest say, 'I forgive you,' and if you'd feel willin' to shake my hand."

"Not to-night, Mrs. Moppet," said Archie, but he spoke more kindly. "My head aches, and I'm going to bed. I forgive you, whatever it is," he added, indifferently.

Mrs. Moppet's heart was overflowing, but Archie was iron, as she knew. She contented herself with going over to the Leightons, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, and un-

burdening her mind to Bettine, although she honorably withheld the name of the true delinquent.

Bettine felt as if a weight had been lifted from her heart ; it had been so hard to associate any idea of meanness with Archie.

In the meantime Archie had thrown himself upon the bed, and dropped into troubled sleep. For the first time, since his loss, little Thumb came to him in dreams, stretching out those hands, those adorable little hands, that had so often clung around Archie's neck. Archie felt a mad desire to feel their touch once more.

“ Come, little Thumb,” he said, with such yearning. “ Come, comfort Archie ! ”

The child seemed making the greatest effort, but something invisible held him. A little nearer, and a strange dimness seemed to touch his angelic brightness,— he drew back shivering.

“ It is the Shadow ! ” cried Archie, awaking with great trembling.

CHAPTER XV.

CAPTIVITY, CAPTIVE.



HERE was no use in trying to sleep. Archie arose and dressed himself. He had thought himself strong enough to bear anything; he had taken a sort of pride that he, a weak mortal, could stand up defying powers visible, and invisible; if the dearest friends must be torn from him—*forever*,—he could and would bear it. And yet this hour had brought him a revelation. If this vivid dream, in any way, approached reality, it was too dreadful to be endured! He had mistaken himself,—he was not ready to give up all hopes of heaven. But how could he ever enter that holy place with his Shadow? He had grown very much afraid of the Shadow—his *master*! Was there no way of escape? Not

by his own strength, — he had tried that. How then? A triumphant strain he had once heard from some grand, full choir, throbbed through his brain, —

“ He ascended on high ; *He led captivity captive !* ”

The glorious words sank into Archie's heart in all their fulness of meaning. A vehement desire arose in him for deliverance, for rest and peace ; and an involuntary cry escaped him, reaching to Him whose ears are never heavy that they cannot hear.

But the answer was not yet ; and restless Archie, creeping down the stairs, stole softly into the street. The town-clock was striking two.

“ This miserable night is passing, it will soon be over,” said he, striking still farther into the suburbs, “ and Philip's store will be safe. I shall have had all my remorse, and pangs of conscience, for nothing.” He almost laughed, as he remembered how many times he had started, thinking he heard the clang of the fire-bell, and the sound of hurrying feet. “ And there it is again,” said he, impatiently, as a

deep boom vibrated through the air. "What an imagination I have!"

And yet the short, sharp strokes continued, growing more persistent, and he was pretty sure one or two other bells were joining in the clangor. He turned, and thought he discerned a faint aurora of light far down in the city. Were all his senses in league to distract him?

"Is there a fire, sir?" asked Archie, of a hasty passer.

"Certainly!" cried the man, pausing a minute to catch a glimpse of the escaped idiot.

Archie's heart gave a throb, as he quickened his steps. Was it in Philip's direction? The crowd was certainly turning that way. So his wicked wish was to be gratified!

Nearer! nearer! he ran in the wildest excitement; he turned the last corner—it was too true! the flames were rushing out of that very window,—the map and the gas-light had met in their fatal embrace! Just as he had wished!

"Oh, no! no!" cried Archie. "I do not think I truly wished it! Oh, if God could only have forgiven me for the thought? Poor Philip,

he was so happy ! And no insurance ! But I will save the stock, I will save everything ! ”

Forward he rushed like a young giant ; he quickly formed a line of men and boys, obeying him like slaves, just from the irresistible impetus of his strong will. How he worked ! how he shouted and ordered, — carrying heavy books, fancy articles, paintings, — almost spiriting them to a place of safety.

“ Archie,” cried Ned Bunscombe, as he saw him lifting loads, which in a moment of less excitement, he could not have stirred, “ do you know I think you may be injuring yourself for life ? You are crazy ! Where is Philip ? Why isn’t he taking a little interest in his own property ? ”

“ Philip ! ” exclaimed Archie, dropping everything. “ Has nobody seen Philip ? ”

A hasty inquiry went around. He had not been heard of.

“ Was he up when you left the house ? ” asked Ned, “ maybe he hasn’t heard anything.”

“ Hasn’t heard ! ” said Archie, in a low tone, “ Ned, he was sleeping up in that little room ! ” he pointed to the back of the store.

“ Well, there’s no use turning so white,” said Ned. “ Of course, he was out long ago. He couldn’t have had any trouble ; the fire has burned very slowly with all this snow ; he’s had oceans of time.”

Archie thought only of the little bottle of chloroform ! He sprang to the stairs, but found it impossible to pass, as the crater of Vesuvius.

“ The Shadow has done its worst,” thought Archie, reeling back. “ It has made me a murderer ! it has fallen between me and Heaven, *forever !* O, God, spare me only this ! ”

He rushed out of the back door, looking up at the little room. There was a ray of hope ; the window was lurid, but the flames had not yet reached it. He looked eagerly around ; there was no sign of a ladder, but there was the spout, and part of an old trellis, upon which some homesick country clerk had once trained a vine.

Archie sprang up like a cat ; he reached the window ; how could he fail with such a will ? One powerful blow, and the sash fell in. A stifling smoke poured out, — he reeled and

almost fell ; but recovered himself and sprang in, with the greatest physical effort he had ever made in his life.

It was as he feared. Motionless, apparently already dead, Philip lay upon the bed, and through all the burning, suffocating air, Archie distinguished plainly the odor of the chloroform, which Philip was holding uncorked in his hand. Archie lost not a minute in throwing him on his back, lashing him firmly with a bit of leather strap, he found hanging on the wall. Back to the window he staggered, his strength fast ebbing with the impossibility of getting one full breath of air.

A loud shout greeted his appearance.

“He wasn’t such a fool, after all !” cried Ned Bunscombe ; “ he has really some one on his back. “Hurry, Archie !” he cried, excitedly.

But Archie knew better than he the need of haste ; the fire was leaping after him, drawn on by the draught of the window ; it was roaring behind him like some wild animal, its hot breath already upon his cheek. He looked out dizzily. A few minutes before he could have walked

over Al Sirat, the bridge of a single hair; but now there had come a revulsion; he sickened and trembled; he had a brief vision of lying shattered, on the pavement below, something which men would cover up, with white, pitying faces.

For the second time that night Archie gave an involuntary cry for help. Then struggling outside the window, he blindly grasped the trellis with one hand, while the other had desperate hold of Philip. The slight wood-work strained and cracked, the wild fire rushed from the window, raging for its escaping prey,—it licked Archie's hand with its greedy tongue!

There was a murmur of deep excitement in the crowd; they were throwing down their coats under him.

“Drop down! drop down!” they cried; “it is your only chance!” For they all saw that he was dizzy and bewildered.

But just then, loud laughter and cheers greeted Bob Leighton, who came staggering under the weight of a tremendous ladder. It was quickly set up, and Archie and Philip were soon safe on the ground.

Archie immediately recovered himself in the air, and turned anxiously to Philip, who was still motionless.

“A very dear friend, I suppose,” said a young medical student, bending over him. “Don’t be so alarmed; his heart beats. Help him over to our office, — we will have him all right in fifteen minutes.”

But Archie stood gaunt and motionless a moment, his face turned to the sky. Very erect he stood, but his “soul was on its knees.”

“O, God,” was the cry of the impetuous spirit, “whatever else thou mayst send, I shall love thee forever for this!”

Then he turned quickly to Ned. “What have they saved while I went after Philip?”

“Nothing,” cried Bob Leighton; “we all came to look after you.”

“How foolish!” exclaimed Archie. “You didn’t leave that box of splendid books, — those illustrated by Doré, I mean, — I had them almost out. Did nobody take them?”

Bob shook his head, hopelessly.

Archie darted around again to the front.

“You wouldn't be such a fool!” cried Ned, catching him, as he seemed ready to rush into the flames.

“There isn't a penny of insurance on anything!” cried Archie, desperately; he was quite beside himself. “If I could only have one minute — thirty seconds more!”—he broke away.

A step or two nearer, a falling timber struck his forehead, and Archie dropped.

“Well, it is better so,” said Ned to Bob. “This may have saved his life. Help me lift him; we must get him home.”

It was all excitement at the Falconers, when Archie was brought home in the morning twilight. Philip was there before him, sitting pale and languid in the great chair, apparently yet quite unable to realize what had happened to him.

“And Archie, too?” cried Adeline, as Ned and Bob brought him in, and laid him on the sofa; “what is the matter with *him*?”

“He thought he was a salamander,” said Bob; “but it was a mistake, and he's pretty badly burned.”

“ Oh, just see his forehead ! what a horrid, horrid scar ! ” cried Adeline. “ I’m afraid it will spoil his good looks forever ! ”

“ Fiddlesticks ! ” cried Ned. “ If I were a girl, I should think him all the handsomer for it. If you only knew what he’d done ! ”

“ What ? ” cried Philip, petulantly.

“ Saved half your goods, at least, ” returned indignant Bob, “ and your life besides, — though I don’t know that that is worth mentioning, ” he added, in a lower tone, meant only for Philip’s ear.

“ Was it *he* that took me out ? ” asked Philip, quickly ; “ no one could tell me. ” He seemed lost in thought.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Moppet, Uncle Howard and Ned, were busy over Archie, doing up his burns in oil and flour, and feeding him stimulants.

“ Oh, my eyes ! ” he cried, pressing them with his hands as he began to revive.

“ His very eyelashes are scorched off, ” said Uncle Howard, preparing some soothing wash, and binding them up with the gentlest touch.

Mrs. Falconer was entirely wrapped up in Philip, whom she drew away to his room, just

as Bettine Leighton — a shawl thrown over her head — appeared in the opposite door, quite waxen and colorless. She had just been hearing a most confused account of the affair. “Both the young men were injured,” her informant said, “and one had been struck by a falling timber, — he heard he had been taken up for dead. He didn’t know whether it was young Falconer or the other one.”

She gave a fearful glance around the room.

“Where is he?” she cried. Oh, Adeline, it isn’t true! he isn’t killed!”

“No, Bettine,” said a faint voice from the sofa. “Can you come here a minute?”

Bettine gave a glad cry, and ran, bending over Archie.

“He is alive and well,” he whispered. “And Bettine, I don’t say it to boast, but *I* saved his life, — saved it for *you*. Will you let that be some little atonement for the injustice I have shown you this winter? Will you try to forgive me, Bettine?”

She burst into tears, she struggled to speak, but not a word would come.

“Well, think of it,” said Archie, sadly, “I

ought not to expect a few minutes to blot out the record of all these months."

Bettine's mouth quivered. If only Mrs. Mopet and the strange gentlemen were away! And here came the physician, too. Bettine drew back timidly, while he, feeling Archie's pulse, prescribed immediate rest and quiet.

"Ah, Bettine, if you could have seen him!" cried Bob Leighton, later in the day, detailing the adventures of his hero. "Right up a straight wall he went, I don't know how he did it — it was a kind of miracle! And then when he got Philip on his back, if you had only seen him clinging to the window, hanging so white and dizzy! Oh, how we fellows all felt! I'll tell you what, grandfather, I found out for certain that I've got a soul."

"How?" said the old man, somewhat amused.

"Why you see I wanted to help him so, and my arms weren't long enough, and I couldn't fly. Oh, I was almost crazy! and something right in here gave me such an awful kick," Bob put his hand on his breast, "I know it was my soul kicking my body to get rid of it!"

Grandfather Leighton laughed heartily at this novel but very graphic way of describing a sensation.

“Bettine,” rattled on Bob, “I don’t see how you can like Philip so much.”

“He has been very kind to me through my sickness. I should be very ungrateful if I did not like him. And Archie, you know, quite gave us up.”

“There will be some explanation yet,” said Bob. “Any way I’d rather be like Archie Falconer, than any boy in the whole world!”

“In all but one respect,” said Grandfather Leighton, with a sigh.

The next morning, Bettine went over, at an early hour, to make inquiries after the two.

“Philip is quite recovered,” said Adeline, “and has gone out with Uncle Howard to see about finding a new store. He felt terribly at first — there was some mistake about insurance I believe; but then Uncle Howard is going to make it all right. Besides, they say it is quite wonderful how much has been saved, — almost everything that is most valuable.”

“And Archie?” said Bettine.

“O, Archie is complaining a good deal, — or not that, exactly, but he disappoints me. Now when I am ill, and anybody asks me how I feel, I always speak cheerfully, and say, ‘better, thank you,’ or ‘I am not suffering at all,’ — it is so much better not to think of self. But I have heard Archie say at least twice this morning — ‘My eyes and head are paining me very much.’”

“Well, I suppose it is as well to tell the truth,” smiled Bettine; but she instantly grew grave, knowing Archie’s powers of self-control. If he admitted that he was suffering, the pain must be something unusual.

“I wonder if he wouldn’t see me a minute,” she asked.

Adeline shook her head, doubtfully. “You know how he has felt towards you lately; but I will ask him.”

The two went up stairs together.

“Certainly I will see Bettine,” said Archie, responding with disagreeable promptness to Adeline’s question, “that is, if she wouldn’t be frightened. I am not a very pleasing object I’m afraid.”

Bettine came forward timidly.

Good Mrs. Moppet had made the room very cheerful and neat; she had brushed Archie's hair as well as she could for the bandages, and had put on his wrapper with the blue facings, and tied his cravat with an almost childish delight. She had made her confession, and they were reconciled again; and he was so gentle and affectionate, she could not keep the tears from her eyes. The strange, cold Archie was gone.

"I've got my baby back again, Miss Bettine!" she whispered, quite overcome.

"I should like to *look* at Bettine," said Archie, with his beautiful smile. "I can tell, the minute I see her," he said to himself, "whether she has come to forgive me, or whether the Shadow still lies between us. Please take off this bandage, Mrs. Moppet, — the one that presses on my eyes, I believe it irritates them more than it does them good. But first darken the room a little, the light may trouble me at first."

Mrs. Moppet obeyed; the last fold was tenderly removed; Archie opened his eyes.

"You needn't have made it quite so gloomy," he laughed. "Where are you, Bettine? it is

like 'finding the black hair in a bucket of tar.' I cannot see anything plainly ;" he pressed his eyes, with a little frown of pain.

Mrs. Moppet and Bettine exchanged looks of surprise. The sun was streaming brightly through one half shutter ; everything in the little room was plainly visible.

Archie seemed a little oppressed by the silence. "Throw open all the shutters, Mrs. Moppet," said he, peremptorily.

She obeyed. Archie's beautiful eyes wandered here and there, with an expression of perplexity and dismay.

"Mrs. Moppet," said he, huskily, "I don't think you would play with me at such a time, — you wouldn't, if you knew how I had suffered from all kinds of foolish thoughts lately. I suppose you are afraid the light will hurt me — the doctor has told you to keep it from me?" he asked it eagerly.

There was no reply. "But Mrs. Moppet," he went on hastily, "if I cannot have daylight, bring me a candle ; if you want to do me a kindness I shall never forget, — bring me even the smallest taper, and bring it quickly ;" his breath came very quick and hard.

“Master Archie,” gasped Mrs. Moppet, glancing wildly at Bettine, “I don’t know what it all means! It is bright daylight, and the sun is shining.”

“You do not really mean that you cannot see us,” quavered Bettine. “You are joking, Archie?”

There was not the faintest tinge of color in Archie’s cheeks or lips, but the proud boy answered firmly.

“Yes, joking, Bettine. But will you come to see me again by and by? I hear Dr. Brown coming, and I would like to see him alone, to consult about a little matter.”

Bettine and Mrs. Moppet hastily withdrew, giving place to Dr. Brown, and Uncle Howard who entered with him.

Archie lost not a moment in laying before him the great fear which had taken possession of his breast.

Dr. Brown made a hasty examination. “Can you see nothing at all?” he asked.

“O, yes, but very dimly, as if through a thick veil. I cannot distinguish your features.”

Dr. Brown looked exceedingly grave.



“Have you ever had any trouble with your eyes before?”

“Sometimes when I had been working too long over my invention,” said Archie, “I would seem to be looking through a fine gauze.”

“And you never spoke of it?” said the physician, regretfully. “How very wrong!”

“I was so occupied, I hadn’t time to think of it,” said Archie, anxiously. “I hope you don’t think” —

“And now you must be exposed to the light and heat of this fire,” muttered Dr. Brown, “and as if that wasn’t enough, must be struck by that timber, — most unfortunate!”

He drew Uncle Howard to the farther window, but Archie’s ears, preternaturally sharpened, heard almost every word.

“Incipient cataract, — feared concussion of the retina — exceedingly dangerous — smaller accidents had been fatal to the sight, — would do what he could, — a few days would determine. Could he trust Mr. Fairchild to see that he was kept perfectly quiet, free from excitement, — and on the lowest diet? The room also must be darkened.”

Then he came back to Archie, speaking a few encouraging words, — which seemed such a mockery, — and bidding him try to rest, while he went to get a few remedies, necessary to apply to his temples.

“Come Mr. Fairchild, we will leave him to take a little nap,” he said cheerfully; and Uncle Howard pressing his hand, went softly away.

“And so I am to be blind, *blind!*” repeated Archie, trying to realize it. “I hoped God had forgiven me, but he hasn’t. I, who have turned from the heavenly Light, who have chosen my shadows, shall henceforth be denied even the sweet light of day!”

This was a calamity that, in all his forebodings of evil, had never occurred to him. He had said, in his joy at saving Philip’s life, “Whatever else Thou mayest send, I shall love thee forever for this.” But he did not know what he was saying; he did not dream that such a cruel, intolerable burden could be laid upon him; he had never had a nightmare horror so fearful. What! was it possible that from this time, the proud Archie Falconer, must be set aside helpless and worthless? Was this the end

of his dreams of riches and honor and fame? Was he, who had gone forth, like so many proud ships on the ocean of life, hoping to find treasures at every port, was he, from henceforth to be nothing but a worthless, tossing piece of drift-wood? He who had been so proud of his strength, — whose heart had given such a throb at some noble words he had once heard, — “Help others; if men climb up by you to stand, take it as the greatest compliment this side heaven,” — he who had meant to help others, — he who had been his father’s *strong* son, Archie, — must consent to be only a burden the rest of his wretched life!

Archie arose and walked the floor. He was ready to suffer and dare everything, but to be willing to be a *burden*, that required more than mortal courage.

Again it came over him, with a more tender, but no less intolerable grief, that he should never again see the sweet spring grass, the flowers, the beautiful, changing sky, the solemn glories of the midnight stars; nor the faces, the dear faces of his father and Ned, and fair little Bettine. If he could only have known!

If he could have looked at them once more, knowing it was the last time, and fixed their expression forever in his mind!

“What misery this is!” said he throwing himself again into the chair. “How I have suffered; and not more than five minutes can have passed, and I have a life-time before me!”

“And this also you owe to Philip!” whispered the Shadow.

“No,” struggled Archie, “I have deceived myself long enough, I must be candid now. All this has come because of the Shadow. If I had been noble enough to warn Philip, the fire would not have happened. The Shadow has darkened my path — *forever*; it has wrought me every evil. I see it now, but it is too late!”

No, not too late. Were not Archie's brief cries being answered, although he knew it not? Was not the Shadow's power broken? Was not the great Conqueror, — who had suffered, being tempted, — already leading this “captivity captive”?

CHAPTER XVI.

HEAVEN — LIGHT.



FEW days passed away, during which Archie was kept in the greatest seclusion and quiet.

“How is it now?” said Dr. Brown, one morning, removing the bandage. “Is it clearer?”

“Darker!” said Archie, hopelessly, “the world is drifting away from me!”

“I was afraid of it from the first,” said Dr. Brown, bluntly. “My poor boy I’m afraid I can’t do much for you.”

“But there are very distinguished oculists in New York,” said Uncle Howard, hastily. “There might be some hope.”

“Yes,” admitted Dr. Brown, “I confess that I haven’t made the study of eyes a specialty.

There are wonderful cures performed there, lately. It would be well to have him see some of those distinguished men; of course they are making discoveries every day, and it is possible something might be done."

He spoke very doubtfully, however, and Archie's face did not light with the slightest ray of hope.

"He shall go to-morrow," said Uncle Howard.

Archie tried to say "thank you," but the words died in a whisper.

"My dear boy," said Uncle Howard, when they were alone, "I have been afraid of agitating you by talking, but I begin to think this silence is worse for you. Come, let us have courage and look at this matter. Let us suppose the very worst — that the case is hopeless, and there is very little happiness left for you on earth. But life, the longest life, is very short after all, and then must come the long ages of eternity. What if God has sent you a little trouble here, only that hereafter you may be wonderfully happy? When you at last stand in the glory of his presence, this life, — with

all its hopes and fears will seem such a mere point of time ; you will feel that you can never be grateful enough for the love which has drawn you to himself, no matter in what way."

"Such a strange way ! Such a strange way !" broke in, Archie. "I do not think I can ever be thankful."

"Do your eyes pain you very much, my dear boy?" said Uncle Howard, tenderly.

"I believe they do, — that is when I think of it. The physical pain is the least of it ; the mind can suffer so much more. O, Mr. Fairchild, I have such a capacity for misery ! I used to think that no faculty was given to us in vain. I used to think that I should go to heaven sometime, — and for the absurdest reason ! You know how I love music, — how anything above the usual order, intoxicates me, fairly makes me crazy with delight, — well, I knew there must be grand music in heaven, as far beyond ours, as immortality is above mortality, and I thought God would like me to hear it, because I could appreciate it ! I thought he could never let old deacon Barker, — who sings through his nose, and is always a half note

below the pitch, — couldn't let him sit down with the harpers, and shut me out."

"Well?" smiled Uncle Howard.

"But now," said Archie, all the enthusiasm fading from his face. "I have the same old idea, — with a variation. I have such a capacity for *misery*, and nothing was given in vain — it all looks very dark, — I shall probably always suffer — here and hereafter!"

"My poor child!" exclaimed Uncle Howard, deeply affected by his tone of hopeless conviction. "Do you remember Him who cried, — 'this is the hour and the *power* of darkness'? Have you greater capacity for suffering than he? And yet he has now gone up to be the *brightness* of the Father's glory! Truly, suffering, and the capacity for it, were not given in vain; there is a purpose in it — to purify and strengthen. Some one has beautifully said, 'God had one son without sin, but never one without suffering.' He seems to lead all his children to him by this strange path. And, Archie, hearts are never drawn more tenderly to each other than by community in sorrow; can you not feel sometimes that this very suffer-

ing is a closer bond between you and the Elder Brother?"

"No," cried Archie, almost impatiently, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Fairchild, but I cannot realize that He suffered at all, — at least, compared with some poor, weak human creatures. What were temptations to him? He could not fall, he was divine."

"It must have been possible for him to fall," returned Uncle Howard, "although the mystery is too deep for our comprehension. He was God and man both, remember, and the phrase made 'perfect through sufferings,' teaches us that his human nature was *imperfect*, and had to be purified by just such fires as ours."

"I never thought of that," said Archie, slowly. "I suppose He must have suffered; but after all, Mr. Fairchild," he added, impetuously, "he could not know the worst. What were all his temptations, and the sufferings on the cross, when he knew that in a short time it would be all over, and he would be happy forever? Do not think me irreverent, but these thoughts have always distressed me; it has always seemed to me there was one pang he

never knew, that is, the fear of what comes *after* life. This dreadful *Beyond* ! I often feel that I suffer something with which this Saviour can have no personal sympathy."

"You think that the true punishment for sin, is not in mere physical suffering, — it is not in the first but the *second* death."

"Yes," cried Archie, eagerly, "and how could the Saviour know anything of that?"

"And if He did *not*, how could he stand in our place, how could he bear the full penalty of sin?" said Uncle Howard. "We are standing upon very holy ground; we must take the shoes from off our feet. But there are holy men, — stewards of the mysteries of God, — who believed that when he uttered that despairing cry, — 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!' — his divinity was entirely obscured, and, for a fearful interval, he knew what was felt by those lost spirits, shut out from God's presence forever!"

The impulsive Archie started up, grasping Uncle Howard's hand. "Is it possible He could have felt that! that brings him very near. Thank you thank you, Mr. Fairchild, I can see

it now. I never could *feel* anything that I could not in some measure understand, if only a little, a very little."

"It is strange that we cannot realize these sufferings more," said Uncle Howard, reverently, "when all nature was convulsed at the sight.

" 'The sun set in a fearful hour,' "

said he, quoting from a poem of sublime beauty and sorrow.

" 'The stars might well grow dim,
When this mortality had power
So to o'ershadow Him !
That he who gave man's breath, might know
The very depths of human woe.

" 'He proved them all; the doubt, the strife,
The faint, perplexing dread,
The mists that hang o'er parting life,
All gathered round his head.' "

" 'The *faint, perplexing dread!*' " repeated poor Archie, in a tone that brought the tears to Uncle Howard's eyes.

"But we need not dread anything more while leaning on Him," said Uncle Howard.

“He is our great conqueror; through him we shall triumph over all our enemies, all our sorrows. Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Victory! how sweet the word had always been to Archie! it thrilled even now to the very depths of his despairing heart. It seemed strange that it should yet be held out as a possibility to the blind, helpless boy. But was it possible for him?

“ ‘And was the Sinless thus beset’ ”
continued Uncle Howard, gently, as if half to himself,

“ ‘With anguish and dismay?
How may *we* meet our conflict yet,
In the dark, narrow way?
Through Him — through Him, that path who trod—
Save, or we perish, Son of God!’ ”

Uncle Howard, added no more, but went softly away. Archie scarcely noticed his going; he was lost in deepest thought. Almost motionless he sat through all the morning, his active mind busy with these new, and all engrossing ideas. How this God-man must have

suffered ! Greater love hath no man, than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. Archie could appreciate that. And *He* had been willing not only to lay down this human life, — which the Father in some strange way, must have made dear to him, — but also, in a brief trance of horror, even his *God-life* ! How Archie could love him for that ; how the warm, erring heart turned to him, how he yearned to lay his hand trustingly in that of the great Sufferer, and perhaps hear him say — ‘ to him that loveth much, much is forgiven.’ ”

Sometimes, indeed, a fresh sense of his calamity, and the struggling future that lay before him, would almost overwhelm him. How could he meet the conflict yet, in the *dark*, narrow way ? But the answer would always come, and a sweet peace and hope would steal over Archie’s face, as his lips moved silently, —

“ Through Him — through Him, that path who trod,
Save, or I perish, Son of God ! ”

Archie had several visits that day and evening, the first one unconsciously.

“ Good morning, Adeline,” said Bettine,

coming softly into her room, "your mother sent me up here to see you."

"Yes, I have to stay here to watch Archie," said Adeline, importantly.

"And he is going away to-morrow," said Bettine, "I wish I could speak to him one minute."

"I should not think you would wish to intrude," said Adeline, coldly, "when you know how he feels toward you. He has not spoken of you, nor given the slightest hint of a wish to see you."

"I would not intrude for the world!" said Bettine, coloring deeply. "But we used to be such friends, —" she turned away her head. "Is he asleep now?" she added, presently, "he looked so, as I passed the door; his face was so peaceful and quiet."

"Perhaps," said Adeline, "we have to give him anodynes all the time; he is so excitable. There! the clock is striking now, — I must give it to him this minute."

"O, Adeline!" cried Bettine, "let me, do let me."

"I don't think he would like it," frowned

Adeline, “ he is used to me, and he likes to have me around him ; he knows that *I* always took his part.”

“ I won’t say one word,” pleaded Bettine. “ I will just put the spoon to his lips, and he will think it is you.”

“ No, that very thing will make him suspect ; I hardly ever go in without repeating some appropriate text of Scripture, — I was just going to say, ‘ Rebuke us not in thy ’ ” —

She didn’t have time to finish, for Bettine had flitted across the hall, and into Archie’s half-open door. At closer view of that pale, immeasurably sorrowful face, Bettine’s heart failed her, her hand trembled violently, and one quick sob escaped her.

“ Thank you, Adeline,” said Archie, with a grateful surprise ; and Bettine fled precipitately.

“ Did you see him, Miss Bettine ? ” cried Mrs. Moppet, intercepting her, as she passed the dining-room door.

Bettine nodded.

“ Isn’t it a woful thing, my dear ? ” the poor old creature’s eyes overflowed. “ And the patientest creetur’, Miss Bettine ! he don’t com-

plain a mite : leastways to mortual ear. But all night long," she sank her voice to a whisper, " he was a playin' on that organ, *very* soft like. I don't think nobody heard him, unless it was Miss Adeline, who has a room so near, and me, who couldn't sleep, and came out to lie like a foolish old dog, at his door. And that music, Miss Bettine ! you never heard anything so sorrowful. Sometimes I git a kind of fear of that organ ; it seems as if there might be spirits shut in there, a talkin' back to him ; why, the strength jest went right out of my knees, and I cried till I couldn't cry no more. And then, only to look through the keyhole, and see him sitting there so grand and wretched, and that dumb Crib by the side of him, and no Master Wilfred in the bed ! It's enough to drive one into lunatics, thinkin' of the trouble that's come on this family !

"And why all this should come to anyone so good as Master Archie," she continued, " will always be a minx's riddle to *me*. If you only knew how the poor people had been a streamin' up to ask after him, with tears in their eyes. Little Peter Crane, wheeled in the wagon

Master Archie gave him ; and people with rheumatiz, with his flannel and plasters on their backs, and other poor souls, with his shoes on their feet. Besides, there's that poor, consumptive girl, sending him the only posy on her rose-bush ; though I can't find that he ever did anything but give her one of his smiles now and then, when he went by. But the one that takes it hardest, they say, is old Peggy Bower ; she's got one of her poor turns, and it's fret, fret, fret, all day, to see Master Archie, — he was always mendin' up little things for her, and bringin' her little presents, — ‘ Now, why do you take on so, ma ? ’ says her daughter-in-law ; ‘ if you should die, there's enough of us to lay you out decent, and bury you, without Master Archie ! ’ But it didn't seem to give her no comfort.”

“ Didn't it ? ” said Bettine, with a little hysterical laugh.

“ She always was an unreasonable creetur',” said Mrs. Moppet. “ But now, all this jest shows you how folks love him. I don't believe there's an hour in the twenty-four, that Master Archie's name hasn't gone up to heaven on

somebody's prayer ; it seems as if the Lord *must* hear 'em. And they ought to pray for the poor father, too. I don't know which takes it the hardest. Do you know, neither father or son has had the courage to see each other yet !" Mrs. Moppet quite broke down. " Well, well, I can't talk about it no more. I hope you tried to say somewhat to comfort Master Archie, my dear."

" I wanted to," said Bettine, tearfully, " but I didn't dare to speak ; he dislikes me so now."

" Dislikes you !" cried the astonished Mrs. Moppet, " and how did you find out that ?"

" Adeline has betrayed it by little things she has told me, and then Archie, himself" —

" Adeline !" interrupted Mrs. Moppet, in great displeasure. " When I was a young girl, my ma used to tell me, ' Gossip lives next door to Slander, and Slander is *murder*.' If she told you tales of Master Archie, I should think you'd have scorned 'em ; most especial, when he was tellin' you contrairy every day this winter."

" That's the very thing, Mrs. Moppet," cried Bettine, opening her eyes. " It was just the

way he treated us that made me believe her. He never came near us in all our troubles; he didn't give us a thought. Though I don't say it to blame him," she added hastily. "I know he had the greatest care of his own."

"Never give you a thought, eh?" cried the old woman. "And you never once suspected—but then, his own right hand never was let into none of the left one's secrets. *I* just guessed it."

"Guessed what, Mrs. Moppet?" cried Bettine, in great excitement.

"I suppose he'd never forgive me, and my tongue will be growin' as long as Miss Adeline's; but"—she lowered her voice,—“did you never suspect that them baskets on the back stoop”—

Bettine colored violently. "O, Mrs. Moppet, you don't mean that Archie"—

"Yes; but I'm sorry I'm such a tattle. I didn't think you'd feel so bad at my knowin' it. I'll promise, Miss Bettine, I'll never breathe it to a livin' soul."

"It isn't that; but I'm so sorry I didn't know it before," said Bettine, most regretfully;

“I thought it was some one else; I'm so sorry!”

“So sorry that it was Master Archie done it?” said the old woman, reproachfully.

“No! no!” cried Bettine, catching Mrs. Moppet's hands. “I would rather it had been he than any one else in all the world!”

And Bettine turned abruptly, and ran away home, leaving Mrs. Moppet wondering over her strange ways.

Archie's next visitor was old Martyn, who was admitted with many cautions to maintain his composure.

“Mr. Archie, sir,” said he, standing in the door, and turning his hat nervously in his hand. “I hope I don't intrude.”

Archie smiled, and held out his hand.

The tears streamed from his faded old eyes. “We've all heard of your trouble, sir, and — and we're sorry, sir!” he finished explosively; greatly frightened and remorseful, over the agitation he found it impossible to control.

But he was reassured when Archie answered very quietly, —

“I know you are. Thank you, Martyn;”

and finding that the old man did not break the silence, he continued, "Have you any more bad news for me?"

"O, no, no, we've had one or two very good days, and some fine orders;" he read them eagerly.

"I am very glad Martyn, for my father's sake," said Archie, with his face still so very quiet. "I should like to have the business kept up through his life; I should like to meet all our debts honorably, and after that it must be settled up."

"But what would become of *you*, Mr. Archie?" said Martyn, in great consternation.

"O, I am good for nothing now, you know. I shall find some place. I believe there are some very good public institutions for the blind, are there not?"

Very firmly he said it, but Martyn's quick ear caught the little quaver of despair.

"But that would never do for *you*, sir, and it doesn't sound like you. I came to propose something this very morning, if you would hear it. There, sir;" he laid a paper in Archie's lap. "Ah, I forgot!" he cried, with a quick self-reproach. "I will read it to you."

It was a series of resolutions, drawn up by Banks, and signed by every workman, down to the most illiterate, who could only make his mark; and, one and all, they besought Master Archie to come back, —“they had never been eye-servants, and they would now promise to work for him more faithfully than ever; all they asked, was that he should come, and direct them with his clear head.”

Archie's composure was all gone; it was with the greatest effort that he controlled an emotion, which would have endangered his last faint hope of restoration.

“Tell me truly, Martyn,” he said, eagerly, “I am afraid you are doing this only for kindness. You have all great, warm hearts, — I shall never forget it, — but tell me — answer me solemnly, in the presence of God, — do you truly think I could be of any use? Would the business truly stand any better chance of success if I should come back again?”

Martyn lifted his hand. “Solemnly, truly, yes!” said he, fervently. “I believe the men would work as they never have before. You've always had a strong hold on them, Mr. Archie,

just your smile seems to please them more than dozens of words from other men."

"Thank you, thank you, Martyn!" cried Archie, wringing his hand, "and you must thank them all for me. This is new life to me."

"Yes," said Martyn, joyfully, "and Banks and I will read you the letters and orders, and we shall have your clear, bright head to tell us what to do. I shall tell them you consent, sir!"

"I think I shall come, that is, in a day or two, when I am better, and when — when I have trained little Crib to lead me by a string."

He tried to smile, but turned in the midst to the window.

"God bless you, sir!" faltered Martyn, hastening from the room.

Early in the evening, Grandfather Leighton and Philip came in with Uncle Howard.

"Just to say good-by, my dear fellow," said Philip, coming forward a little awkwardly. "I wanted to see you before, but was so afraid of troubling you. I couldn't let you go, though, without thanking you for your great service to me. I feel it very deeply, I assure you. And it is such a horrid bore about your eyes, my

dear fellow. I shall never be able to do enough for you."

"You certainly owe him everything," said Uncle Howard.

"He owes me nothing," cried Archie, shrinking from praise not justly his due, "I have a confession to make. I should like you all to hear. I ought to have made it before. I have been very angry with Philip for a long time, for certain foolish, wicked reasons of my own. The night of the fire I was at his store, I knew there was no insurance; I saw a paper map blowing out toward a gas-light; I thought it was dangerous, but Philip didn't notice it, and I didn't tell him. I didn't care if the store did burn down — that is, for a few minutes, only a few minutes; afterwards I would have given worlds to have saved it."

"And that is what you were staring at!" cried Philip. "I never suspected what was in your head. But if you had told me, it wouldn't have made the least difference; I *had* noticed it myself, and intended to turn it out; but, you see, my head pained me, and I threw myself on the bed, with my chloroform, just for a moment

I thought, and I must have spilled some on the pillow, and lost myself very soon. The rest you know."

Grandfather Leighton was pleased with Philip ; he had never appeared to greater advantage.

"If Bettine likes him," he murmured, "I shall not refuse ; although I had once far other plans. Poor, poor Archie !"

"You are very kind, Philip," said Archie, his cheeks burning with the humiliation of the confession, "but I think I might, at least, have stopped the broken pane."

"And I should not have let you," said Philip, "I always liked a little air stirring, and this gave me just enough."

"You see the wrong thought is just the same," said Uncle Howard, gently, "but God has spared you the wickedness of the deed. And it was a most blessed thing that you came in, that evening, otherwise, who would have known that Philip was sleeping in that little room, and who, besides you would or *could* have made such exertions for his life? exertions which must have been spurred by the heartiest repentance, I am sure. My dear boy," con-

tinued Uncle Howard, taking Archie's hot hand, — (he had been talking with Martyn, that morning, and had learned some of the "foolish reasons" for disliking Philip,) — "I honor you very much. In *my* opinion that unworthy thought is quite lost, swallowed up, in the blaze of your noble, heroic deed."

Archie's face was radiant. But Philip, who had thought himself happy a moment before, who was already in possession of a handsomer store, with a capital quite doubled by Uncle Howard, looked troubled. His Shadow, his jealous Shadow begrudged this praise, even to poor Archie, who could never in any way, be his rival again."

"I suppose I ought to go now, Archie," said he, in rather a constrained voice. "I'm afraid I tire you."

"Wait one minute," said Archie, drawing him aside, and speaking very low. "A long time ago, Philip, I robbed you of Rosette, and, to my great grief, you considered the loss irreparable. But I know I have something now that you would like very much. As some atonement for the Past, and a pledge that all

our enmities are forgiven and forgotten, I should like to have you accept — I should like to give you — Sultan.”

Now the bestowal of a horse was but a slight gift in comparison with the life which Archie had already so bravely risked in his behalf, but never had Philip's heart been so deeply moved. That he should offer him Sultan — the pride of his heart — which he had so often and so bitterly told him should *never* be his, was something which Philip could not understand. For a moment the husks of complacency and self-delusion, were stripped away, and he saw his true character in most unflattering contrast with the one he had so pitied and despised.

“You know *I* can never ride him again,” said Archie, with his patient smile, “and even if I could, I would rather he should be yours. You will not refuse me, Philip.”

Something nobler than he had ever known, awoke in Philip's heart, as he grasped Archie's hand, with some inarticulate words.

“I am afraid we are staying too long,” said Grandfather Leighton, noticing that Archie's pallor was returning. “Besides you have yet

to see your father. I only came to say good-by, and bid you God speed. I hope the earth-light is coming back to you, my dear, dear son, but, if not, — the heaven-light is better. The Lord make his face *shine* upon thee, the Lord lift up the *light of his countenance* upon thee, and give thee peace.”

“I shall try to think it right, whatever the result may be,” said Archie, with his rare, sweet smile.

Grandfather Leighton went home with his face fairly luminous.

“And what pleases you so grandfather?” asked Bettine.

“Unto him that sat in darkness, a great Light hath shined,” said the old man, triumphantly.

“Can he see, grandfather!” cried Bob, rousing from great depression.

“Not with his mortal eyes.” Bob’s countenance fell. “But I never saw a greater change! It was all that was wanting to Archie,” said the old man, fondly.

“I wish I could describe how he has impressed me,” he continued, presently. “Did

you ever hear some instrument played by a bungler, Bettine, and afterwards taken into the hands of a master? Did you notice the wonderful difference? You could hardly believe it the same. Just so there are bunglers with *souls*, it seems to me, — souls that have always seemed discordant, only because unhappily managed and tortured, — and we are lost in wonder at the exquisite harmony, when, at last, like Archie's, they feel the touch of the great Master."

CHAPTER XVII.

EARTH — LIGHT.



UNCLE HOWARD and Archie were gone but a few days. They returned quite unexpectedly during the night, but Mrs. Moppet — letting them in — could make no discoveries from the perfect quiet of the two faces.

Uncle Howard, however, obeyed an early summons to Mr. Falconer's room.

“There is hope,” said he, hastily answering the mere look of eager inquiry. “There was some dislocation of the delicate tissues of the eye as Dr. Brown supposed, — but slight, very slight; it was thought the trouble would right itself in time. The principal difficulty was from cataract, which had been coming gradually for a long time, but was more actively developed by the accident. But it was not the worst form

of that disease," he added quickly, noticing Mr. Falconer's nervous agitation. "I do not very well understand these doctor's terms, — I think something was said about its being *soft* — a fluid cataract, and it might be cured by *absorption* — I believe they called it. At any rate, an operation has been performed by a most skilful oculist, and we must hope for the best."

"Then there is no *certainty* that he is cured?" said Mr. Falconer, "I hope you will tell me the worst. If I think you are keeping anything from me, my imagination will only go far beyond the reality."

"I will tell you all," said Uncle Howard, "we might look forward with every confidence, if this were not a most unfavorable season of the year for such an operation; they prefer warm weather, on account of there being less danger from cold, and subsequent inflammation. Besides they might possibly be mistaken as to the extent of the injury which the eye had received from the concussion, and some unforeseen difficulty might set in. You see I tell you all. But we have used the greatest precautions, — coming home in the night trains to avoid any

possible shock of light. And we shall know the result in a week ; he must be kept very quiet, in a darkened room for seven or eight days, and then the bandages may be removed a few minutes at twilight."

"Does the boy know all this?" asked Mr. Falconer.

"Every word. Nothing could be worse for him than the agitation of uncertainty. Besides it was best that he should know all the danger, in order that he might avoid the slightest imprudence."

And how was it with Archie, during the dreary days that followed? The enforced quiet and gloom had a great effect upon his imagination ; he dared not allow himself to hope, and at times, he sank into the deepest despondency. Doubts and fears, which always reserve their worst attacks for seasons of heaviest trial, — came upon him now. Had God truly smiled upon him, he asked, and accepted him? or might not the heavenly peace and happiness of those few hours, be only a delusion of his imagination. He distrusted all his feelings ; he had been pleased that he could think of Philip

without a thrill of the old bitterness, and anger ; but could he believe the Shadow truly conquered, or was it only in a trance? It had wrought him such evil ; it still lay between him and Bettine, — Bettine, who had no word of sympathy for him, — who had never come near him. And who could tell if it did not yet stand darkly between him and Heaven? Could that wicked thought be forgiven so easily, or was he to be punished still further? And he said to himself, “ This week shall decide. If God has truly blotted this out, he will give me my sight. If not — !” his agitation was always too great to carry out the thought.

It was at one of these crises that Adeline entered the room, in one of her most patronizing and officious moods.

“ And how are your poor eyes to-day? Do you know the doctor says that burn on your forehead isn't going to leave any scar? Isn't that very nice? Now what shall I do for you? Would you like a drink? Or, maybe, you would like to have me read to you ; here is a little book of sacred poetry, with some very sweet things in it.”

“ This room will be too dark for your eyes, I'm afraid,” said Archie, with a prompt thoughtfulness.

“ O, I don't mind it at all. Anything to give you pleasure. Now here is something very appropriate.” She began —

“ ‘ Pain's furnace heat within me quivers,
God's breath upon the flame doth blow.’ ”

“ Oh, Adeline ! ” cried Archie, abruptly, while he shrank visibly, “ I can't bear that. I have grown very weak, lately, nervous, I think women call it ; and some things affect me strangely. ‘ God's breath upon the flame doth blow ! ’ it is frightful ! Adeline,” he continued, more gently, “ you must pardon me, but when anyone has a great trouble I think he wants to be all alone for a while. You are very kind, — I thank you from the bottom of my heart ; but I was always strange, you know, — I wish you wouldn't speak to me for these two or three days ; I would rather not see any one.”

“ I didn't expect this from you, Archie,” said Adeline, in a deeply injured tone, “ Harriet Bunscombe wanted me to walk with her

this very day, and I refused — just to stay home and comfort *you*; but this is my reward! I am very glad, though, to know your real mind. I shall not trouble you very soon again.”

Archie could hear her voice breaking into tears.

“Adeline,” said he humbly, “I have always been the rough, ugly stone. I am very dangerous, unworthy company for the pitcher.” This was not meant for sarcasm now.

But Adeline had flounced away, and in five minutes more, was sharing the injury with Bettine.

“It is all owing to you, Bettine,” she said, indignantly, “‘I don’t wish to see anyone,’ said Archie, and he said it so particularly that I knew in a minute what he meant; he would never have so wounded my feelings, if he had not suspected who gave him his drops that morning; he was determined to secure himself from another intrusion.”

Bettine, again unconsciously, accepted Adeline’s surmises for undoubted certainty.

“He may be perfectly secure,” she said, proudly.

“What has excited you so, Archie?” said Uncle Howard, coming in a short time afterwards, and immediately administering an anodyne. “You must try not to let your mind dwell on this subject. Try to think of something in which there cannot possibly be any disappointment. ‘Whoso followeth Me *shall not* walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life,’” he added, gently. “Light, precious light, will come in the grand life beyond, if not here.”

Archie could not answer.

And so passed that weary week. If we should “count time by heart-throbs, not by figures on a dial,” who shall say how long it was to the waiting boy?

The decisive day dawned at last. Everyone tried to be very calm, but all usual occupations lost their charm, and the hours dragged as never before.

“Miss Bettine,” said Mrs. Moppet, at the fence, laughing and crying together, “Master Archie won’t see nobody to-day; he has locked himself in his room, and he hain’t eaten as much as a sparrer on the house-top, I watched through

the key-hole. But he's ben talkin' to that organ most all day, and the Lord only knows what it says back to him; it seems a comfort, though."

Poor Bettine sighed. Only the night before, she had a dream that her fair hair had spun itself out in golden pipes, and her pretty teeth had changed into white ivory keys, and Archie loved her again. But it would not do to tell Mrs. Moppet.

The afternoon shadows grew long; it was four o'clock — it was a quarter past — it was half past; at *five*, Uncle Howard was to come and unloose the bandage!

Archie could not play any longer; he walked up and down the room; between each slow tick of the clock, he thought of innumerable things — he made the tour of the universe in one of those infinite seconds; long before the little silver stroke announced the quarter of five, he had some new and almost fearful thoughts upon the duration of eternity. Large drops gathered on his forehead, and trickled down his cheeks.

"I cannot wait any longer," he said, "I must undo it myself. Besides if — if it is *darkness* — I would rather meet it first alone."

His hands trembled violently ; it was only with the greatest difficulty he could unloose the knots. Now the bandage fell to the floor, but he did not yet open his eyes. One minute more would make him so happy, or — “ Let me *hope* one minute more,” he said, his heart beating to suffocation. His eyelids trembled ; strange colors, blue, and green and crimson seemed dancing before him. He fell upon his knees, —

“ O, Light of life, help me to bear whatever thou art sending me ! ” And with a strong, convulsive effort, Archie opened his eyes.

Was he dreaming ? Every night, for the last week, in his troubled sleep, he had seen the two windows, with their soft gray blinds, and white fringed curtains, the green leaves of the carpet, the organ, the pretty fire in the grate, — he saw them all now, but wasn't this just as much of a dream as the others ? O, if God would only let it last forever ! But there on the mantel, was Mrs. Moppet's own elegant china cup, — a wedding gift from Mr. Moppet, which she valued among her greatest treasures, but had thought none too good to hold Master Archie's

drops, — he hadn't seen *that* in his dreams. And there, as he looked upon the floor, was a pin, — a shining pin! he could see it even in the dim light; it was a new pin, with such a bright head — he did not know a pin could be so beautiful! Perhaps he could pick it up. Yes, he did! and he didn't have to feel for it, — he put his hand right down where it lay, and took it up in his thumb and finger! What ecstasy! And there was his desk — his old, worn desk, with some marks on it — precious little cuts made by little Thumb — Archie never thought to see them again. Ah, what happiness! for it could not be a dream, — it must — it *must* be reality! Dear little marks! he bent and kissed them, he kissed the pin, — he was wild, crazy with joy. He ran to his organ. Out, out with every stop, and down with the swell! And through the whole house throbbed and swelled the triumphant notes of the hallelujah chorus.

Mr. Falconer heard it in his sick room, started, and then fell back, a smile on his white face; he understood his boy. There had not been such a burst of harmony in more than a year.

“Thank God! thank God!” he cried, his tears falling like rain.

Uncle Howard heard it, on his way to Archie's room, and Mrs. Moppet in the kitchen, dropped the best china pitcher, and, never stopping for the pieces, also ran to congratulate Master Archie.

“Let me in, Archie,” cried Uncle Howard, in a pause of the chorus.

He opened the door, and flung himself into his arms.

“Forgive me, Mr. Fairchild! I couldn't wait another minute.”

“I know you couldn't,” said Uncle Howard, his eyes very misty, while his look of anxiety passed away, as he saw the dimness of the room. “I was only afraid you might have been imprudent, might have opened a window.”

“O, no,” said Archie, “but I would like to.”

“Not yet, not yet. I am afraid of the glare of the snow, even in this twilight.”

“Well, I have happiness enough,” cried the excited Archie. “See, Mr. Fairchild, I picked up that pin! Drop one, drop one anywhere,

and see if I can't find it!" he cried, with the eagerness of a child. "Ah, how good God has been to me! Mr. Fairchild, did you ever see that line. 'How quick a smile of God can change the world?' Isn't it wonderful?"

What a treat it was to see him. Uncle Howard, as he wiped his eyes, felt that it was one of the happiest moments of his life.

"And O, Mrs. Moppet!" cried Archie, catching sight of her in the door, quivering like an immense mould of jelly, "how beautiful you are! And you have on a cap with blue ribbons," he cried, triumphantly, throwing his arms around her, and kissing the trembling old mouth.

"O, Master Archie!" she gasped, "Master Archie? there never was anything so beautiful as you be. I should so like to kiss your big, beautiful, blue eyes, just as your mamma would, if she was here."

"Well, quick then, Mrs. Moppet," laughed the happy Archie. "I can't spare but half a second, when they've been shut so long."

"But they must be bound very soon again," said Uncle Howard, anxiously. "A little im-

prudence now, and all this good might yet be lost. Above all, don't try to pick up any more pins."

"I will do whatever you think right, Mr. Fairchild," said Archie, reluctantly. "But can't I, first, have one little look from the window?"

"It has grown dark so rapidly, I don't think it could hurt you."

Archie peered eagerly through the blind.

"How beautiful! O, how beautiful!" he exclaimed rapturously, at sight of the snow-fringed trees standing against the sky, in whose violet depths hung the first, tremulous evening star. "It seems like a new heaven, and a new earth; surely it never looked like this before."

Uncle Howard smiled.

But suddenly, as he gazed, an expression of pain passed over Archie's face. Down the dim road were walking two figures, who stopped at Grandfather Leighton's gate. They were talking very earnestly, and one — it was Philip — was holding the hand of the other, who was — yes, who was Bettine!

In this soul-harp, of which Grandfather

Leighton spoke, there are many earthly strings, and one vibrated very discordantly just at that moment. It was the first drop of bitter in that cup which Archie had thought so unalloyed.

“There is something, yes, *much* left to suffer,” he said to himself. “But much, O, infinitely much for which to be thankful,” he finished, resolutely.

“This is hurting you,” said Uncle Howard, who was watching his face. “I shall bind your eyes immediately, — you have seen too much.”

“Yes, I have seen too much,” said Archie, submitting very quietly; his excitement seemed to have suddenly given way to languor.

Uncle Howard blamed himself greatly for having indulged him so long. But as he tied the bandage, he, too, happened to glance from the window; he saw the two figures, and a curious, tender smile came over his face, while he smoothed back Archie’s hair with something of the pitying caress one gives to an innocent, grieved child.

“Could you see Mr. Martyn a minute?” asked Mrs. Moppet, from the door.

“O, yes,” said Archie, quickly; he felt that

it would be something of a relief to talk about the business.

“Do not stay very long ;” whispered Uncle Howard, as he passed out. “He has been very much excited, and the danger is not all over yet. It would be very bad for his eyes to get in a feverish state. Be as quiet as you can.”

But it was useless to counsel quietness. The old man had just heard the good news, and was beside himself with joy.

“Mr. Archie,” said he, trying to speak, then breaking down, and all the time wringing Archie’s hand like a vice, till he could hardly restrain a cry of pain, — “Mr. Archie, we can never be thankful enough for this !”

“Never,” said Archie, solemnly. “My whole life will be a thanksgiving.”

They sat for some time talking it over. Martyn wanted to hear again and again every particular from the first visit to the great doctor, down to the crowning moment when he saw the little pin on the floor. He was still devouring it with a beaming face, when he remembered the errand upon which he came, and, all at once, grew troubled and silent.

Archie felt the change.

“ How full of self I have been,” said he, “ I haven’t once asked after the business, and you have had everything on your shoulders these last few weeks. How much we owe your faithfulness ! ”

“ Not much, not much, Mr. Archie. My old shoulders haven’t been quite strong enough. I’ve done the best I could ; but we’ve been so crippled, taking that money out of the business, — I’ve hoped now and then, we’d weather it through, but things are looking very bad again. We have used up most of the raw material, — we are needing ready money to buy supplies, or the men will have nothing to do, and the works will come to a stop in a week at the farthest.”

“ But the money for that last large order we filled, — Couldn’t we possibly get hold of that ? ”

“ That’s just the worst of it, Mr. Archie ; instead of the money, a letter comes to-day, and they’ve just *failed* ! And I can’t help thinking they knew they were going, when they sent us the order ; there are plenty such thieves and

rascals in the world. We might send some one on to see if we could recover anything, but I don't believe we could get much out of the rogues. There, Mr. Archie, how pale you look. I oughtn't to have troubled you, and I wouldn't, if I could have seen any way to turn. I saw we must all go up, in a day or two, unless possibly, *you* could think of something."

The old man looked at him with wistful eagerness, his withered hands working together.

"Then there's that other note falling due before a great while," he continued. "Forgive me, Mr. Archie, but I couldn't bear it alone any longer; it's going to be my death-blow, if you can't think of something. I came up to talk with your father, but he looked so poorly, and coughed so hard, I hadn't the heart. So I just smoothed over everything, once more; it will come out soon enough, God knows," quivered the old man, for he read no hope in Archie's downcast face.

"It is not best, nor safe, to be too happy in this world," thought Archie, almost with a groan, dropping his head in his hands.

There was a gentle knock, and Uncle How-

ard reappeared. He was uneasy at the length of the call; besides, from something he had heard on the street, that day, he had half guessed that Martyn's business could be of no pleasant character. One look at the two down-cast faces, more than confirmed his suspicions.

"I beg pardon, if I am intruding," said he, "but I came to ask a favor of the firm of the Falconers. I have already obtained the permission of your father, Archie, but I should like your approbation, and also that of Martyn," — he gave a kindly smile to the old man, — "who will tell me in a minute whether this is a reasonable request."

"The firm of the Falconers is past doing favors," said Martyn, solemnly, without raising his head.

"I have a little money, just now," said Uncle Howard, without appearing to have heard him, — "say fifteen or twenty thousand dollars, in an investment that does not suit me, and I would much prefer having it in some good, profitable business; now, what I propose is, that you will let me place it with *you*, and that you will take me as a silent partner. I

shall not make any trouble," he said with his pleasant smile, "I am perfectly satisfied with the present management. What do you say to it, Archie? is it asking too much of a favor?"

"Say to it?" cried Archie, springing up, his face all aglow. "O, Mr. Fairchild, how can I ever express to you —"

"Your regret that you cannot take me?" smiled he.

"O, no! no! I accept the gift as freely as it is offered, for it *is* a gift, — it is more — it is a rope thrown to a drowning man! Don't you suppose I can understand it, sir — this wonderful favor to yourself? O, I did not believe there could be such generosity in the world! But you shall not be sorry for it, sir," he caught both his hands. "It *is* a good business — a first-rate business, *isn't* it, Martyn," he appealed to the old man, who sat dazed and speechless. "All we want is a little ready money to pull us through this strait, and then, Mr. Fairchild, Martyn and I will strain every nerve to prove this the best investment you ever made in your life! Won't we, Martyn? Won't we, you dear, foolish, old Martyn?" for Archie could hear him beginning to sob for joy.

“ Indeed we will, Mr. Archie ! ”

“ But I don’t want you to,” smiled Uncle Howard, “ the ordinary rates of interest will perfectly satisfy me. Come, Martyn,” said he, noticing a nervous twitching of Archie’s mouth, “ we will go into my room, and make an inventory of what is most needed, and Archie shall look it over to-morrow.”

Left alone, it was long before Archie’s tumultuous thoughts arranged themselves with any coherency, and he could fully realize the blessings which had come to him.

“ I am very happy,” he said, at length, “ I shall no longer be a helpless log — the great blessing of *usefulness* is given back to me. And all anxiety about the business is over; my father’s last days will be serene and free from care. How wonderful it is! I think I am very happy.”

But even as he spoke a quick pain darted through his eyes, and a tear rolled down his cheek. He was angry with himself.

“ Only one thing has been denied the child,” he said, “ and dimness comes upon everything else. How can God have any further patience with such ingratitude? ”

Again he reasoned with himself, "It is my own fault that I have lost her; it is only my own wicked Shadow that came between us, and turned her heart away to gentlemanly Philip. Can I expect to escape without any evil consequences for my sin? Surely one thing might be withheld, when so much has been given. Philip and Bettine! I must accustom myself to think of them together. I *will* conquer this selfishness—I will rejoice in their happiness, I will be a true friend to them both."

Again he carefully probed his heart with regard to Philip, — did he envy, dislike, hate him any longer? No, thank God! he believed that feeling was gone forever — gone from that night when he carried him helpless out of the burning store. And now, when he next saw him, could he congratulate him, and wish him all happiness? He shrank a little. Not to-day, perhaps, nor to-morrow, but soon — very soon.

"Archie," said a cheerful voice, "I am coming to take tea with you to-night."

It was Uncle Howard, followed by Mrs. Moppet, who quickly arranged the little table.

"Now," said he, "we have the faintest little

lamp, which is to be set on the mantel-piece behind you, and you shall have your bandage raised five minutes, and eat just like anybody."

Who would think there could be such rapture in such simple pleasures! Archie came down from the heights of self-denial, and could almost have cried for joy, because the little cloth was so white, and the butter so yellow, and the jelly such magnificent garnet. And then dear Mrs. Moppet was actually fascinating in her breadth of skirt, and her very best cap, in honor of the occasion. For the moment, Archie was certainly happy; but tea was soon over, and the extinguisher pulled over his reluctant eyes.

"Are you very tired?" asked Uncle Howard.

"Not in the least," returned Archie, quickly.

"I have another favor to ask of you."

"Anything, anything," cried Archie, eagerly; "that is, if it is truly a favor, — you could not give me greater pleasure."

"There is some one," said Uncle Howard, "who, I am sure, is very anxious to see you, and congratulate you, although she will not say so; she is very much afraid you will think her intruding."

Archie's face fell.

“You have been treating her very badly, lately, as I have discovered in a confidential interview,” smiled Uncle Howard, “and I have rather taken her part. I do not think I could have been so ungracious to a girl, who — besides being very pretty — has a most lovely character; a little too sensitive, perhaps, just now, but I can hardly blame her.”

Archie sighed. How could Uncle Howard, generally so clear-sighted, be so blinded with regard to Adeline! To be sure, she had always been hanging around him with endless attentions, but her motives had been so transparent, and every kind act had only seemed another finger-post, pointing back to self. And yet this might have been only the conclusion of his own unloving, impatient heart; perhaps she had been faithfully trying, in her way, to be Christ-like; and certainly he, Archie, had given her very scant sympathy and encouragement. He would be kinder to her from this time forth, — he would have more patience.

“Yes, Mr. Fairchild,” said he, “I confess that I have been boorish and ungentlemanly.

It shows a very good spirit in her, to rejoice in my happiness, and I should like to tell her so. I hope we shall be better friends after this."

Uncle Howard smiled, and bending a little closer, whispered, — "and if some time you should prove *more* than friends, Archie, — be sure of *my* best wishes and blessing."

He was gone, while Archie sank into deep dejection. A few minutes ago he had thought there was nothing in the world he would not be happy to do for Uncle Howard, — he now discovered there was *one* favor too great.

"If this must be the return for the fifteen thousand, I cannot take it," he said, nervously.

"What a weariness life is, after all !"

There was a light step at the door.

"Come in," said Archie, without raising his head ; that last suggestion had so greatly oppressed him.

She came in very timidly, and paused. Archie waited a minute ; the first salute was generally some ill-chosen text of Scripture, — poor Adeline ! he waited patiently for the opening fire ; afterwards he would ask her to forgive him. But there was not a sound, — the silence

began to be awkward. Archie must make the first advances himself.

“Come here, Adeline, and sit down by me. I want to have a long talk;” he smiled, and pushed a chair.

But instead of advancing, he heard retreating steps, and pushing up the bandage, in his perplexity, he saw not the dark eyes of Adeline, but the sweet, tearful face of Bettine, framed in its mass of golden hair; Bettine, who was going to some little evening party, and was dressed all in white, with a little cluster of geranium leaves on her bosom. Was there ever such a lovely vision!

“I knew there was some mistake, Archie,” she said, in a constrained voice. “I was sure you did not mean to see *me*. I am going right away.”

“Wait a minute, Bettine,” he cried, “perhaps you are right. I didn’t want to see you just yet, but only because I was afraid of *myself*. I was afraid I had not strength to give you up;” and even as he spoke, he resolutely drew the linen fold back in its place. “But, Bettine, I have been struggling with myself. I

feel very differently now ; I freely and fully give you up to Philip — freely and fully, Bettine !”

“ That is very generous,” said Bettine, with the least little toss of her head.

Archie colored. “ I know what you mean. You think I am very generous with what was never mine. But, Bettine, I have had you in my hopes and dreams all my life ; you could not help *that*. I have always meant — as soon as I was old enough, and had some little success in business — to ask you to let me take care of you, and carry you over all the rough places, just as I used when we were little children ; and always, when I was alone, always I have called you ‘ *my* little Bettine.’ This is what I have given up — I have given you away out of my dreams. Do you know what that means to a man, Tiny ? But forgive me. I have no right to speak so to you, now. Philip would not like it ; and it is a very ungenerous way of giving you up.”

“ You are very kind,” murmured Bettine, again, “ but you have made a mistake ; there is no necessity for giving me up to *Philip*.”

“Why?” asked Archie, involuntarily.

“Because — I like some one else a great deal better,” said Bettine, faintly; he had to strain his ears to hear it.

“Some one else a great deal better!” repeated Archie. A light broke in upon him. Could Uncle Howard have meant *Bettine*, all the time? He tore off his bandage; what was danger to him, in that moment of supreme excitement?

“Bettine! Bettine!” he cried, “it couldn’t possibly be *I*?”

“O, no!” she replied quickly; but the pale little Bettine he had last seen, had suddenly grown crimson and beautiful, like the East at the rising of the sun.

He stretched out his arms, with the smile she could never wholly resist.

“And you thought *I* didn’t want to see you? O, Bettine! Bettine!”

She hesitated a moment, and then — the long misunderstanding and pain over at last — she ran to lie sobbing on his breast, just as she had often done when they were little children, a dozen years ago.

There was a sound of trampling feet outside the house, quite a large crowd seemed gathering; but Archie and Bettine noticed nothing, till suddenly a joyful crash of martial music shivered the frosty air.

“Master Archie,” cried Mrs. Moppet, arriving breathless at the door, “it’s the workmen, and Mr. Banks, and Mr. Martyn, and they’ve come up to serenade you, and wish you joy. O, Master Archie, this is the most proudest moment of my life!”

“Yes, Archie,” said Uncle Howard, coming in, “they are calling for you; you will have to show yourself one moment at the window.”

Archie, trembling with happiness, — the cup of life overflowing, — made his appearance amid tumultuous shouts, and hurrahs for Archie Falconer — three times three! the noise was deafening. Crib barked wildly, — Bob Leighton stood behind Archie, upside down, in every sense of the word, his heels struggling in the air. All was joy, tumult and delight. All but Adeline, whom Archie suddenly discovered, standing, pale and gloomy, at his side.

“Have you nothing to say to me, Adeline?”

said the excited boy, taking her hand, "no congratulations?"

"I certainly should not feel it right to add anything to your praises," she said, gravely, "'Woe unto you when all men speak well of you.'"

"I am very glad I can depend upon *you* for saving me that penalty," said Archie, with a smile he could not repress.

"I do not know;" said Adeline, turning away with a quick sob, "it will be a new character for me to assume. I have always been your best friend, Archie, I have always taken your part."

Archie was immediately sobered. "You have, indeed, been very generous to one most unworthy of your kindness," said he, earnestly. "Would it be the least return if I say that I hope my whole future life will prove how truly I am *your* friend?"

"Apparently *not*!" chuckled Bob, as Adeline suddenly withdrew her hand, and was seen no more that night.

Before Archie had quite recovered himself, Mrs. Moppet thrust a bit of paper in his hand. "From Mr. Philip," said she.

Uncle Howard had gone down to distribute refreshments among the men, and thank them in Archie's name.

"Could you read it to me, Tiny?" said Archie, drawing her aside; and, in the lowest tone, she read.

"DEAR ARCHIE:—I ought to be noble enough to come to your room, but I can't. Will you let me shake hands over this piece of paper, instead? It is my turn to have disappointments now. I have been a conceited, self-complacent fool, all my life, but I think I am truly glad that you are happy.

PHILIP."

"I will keep Sultan — till you are ready to use him."

"Poor Philip!" said Archie, deeply affected.

But rather, *happy* Philip. Was not the light dawning upon him? Was not *his* Shadow also shrinking away?

"Come, boys," cried old Martyn's shrill voice, penetrating even to Archie's room, "we mustn't stay too long; he is far from well yet, and this may be bad for his eyes."

"That's true," they cried, "we mustn't risk losing our eyes again," and with a farewell burst of music, and one more round of hearty

cheers, that seemed to fairly shake the house, they quietly marched away.

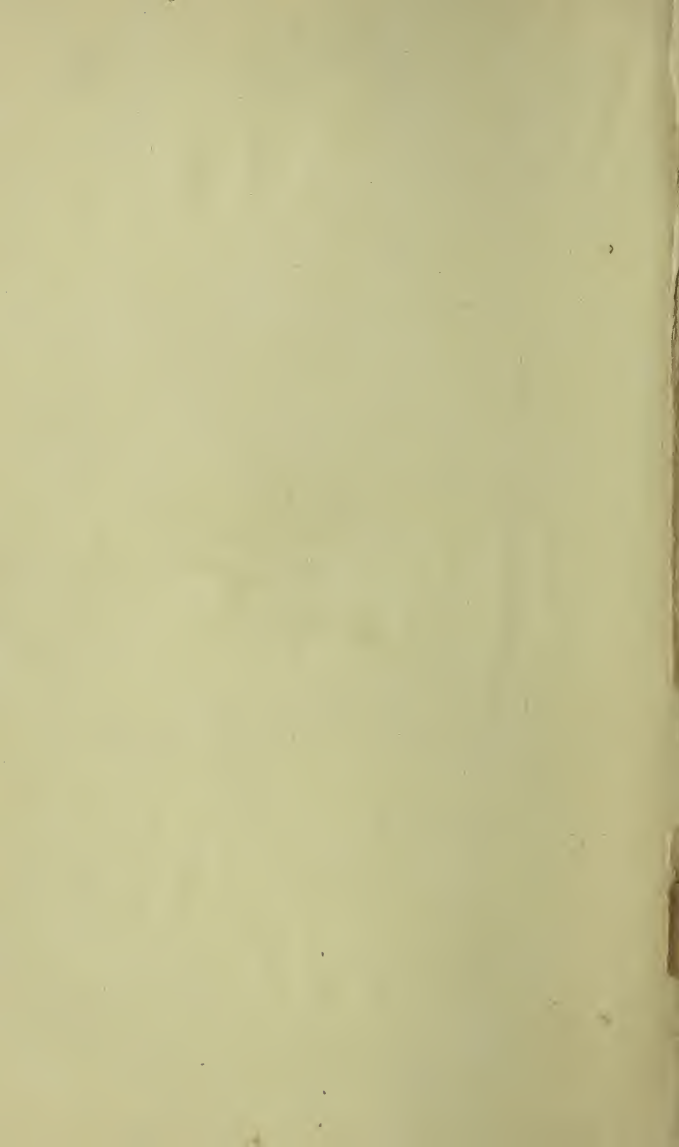
And that night, — after Uncle Howard had smilingly ordered every one from the room, and Archie was left alone, — what words shall describe its rapture? There had, perhaps, been *one* thing wanting — a fair, flaxen head — a pair of sweet eyes dancing with innocent pride. With a vague impulse, Archie groped his way to the organ, to do what he thought he could never have heart for again — to play, with most tender, caressing touch, the incongruous favorites, the “Gospel Banner,” and the “March of the Forty Thieves.” And in this way he called little Thumb. Did the child hear? Archie was *sure*, he had a dear conviction that the happy spirit understood it all — that if little Thumb were in existence, no matter in what remote part of God’s universe, that sympathetic little heart *must* be thrilling with an added joy that night.

He knelt by the window, once more daring to push aside the bandage, that, into the solemn depths, — sprinkled with golden worlds, — he might gaze with an unutterable adoration.

Thanks, O, thanks to the Light of life ! for, that night, there was no Shadow between him and Heaven ; and — lesser blessing, but sweet, infinitely sweet — there was no Shadow between him and Bettine !









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